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Rhythm

Issue 301 | £6.99

Every Drummer Needs It

Gadd

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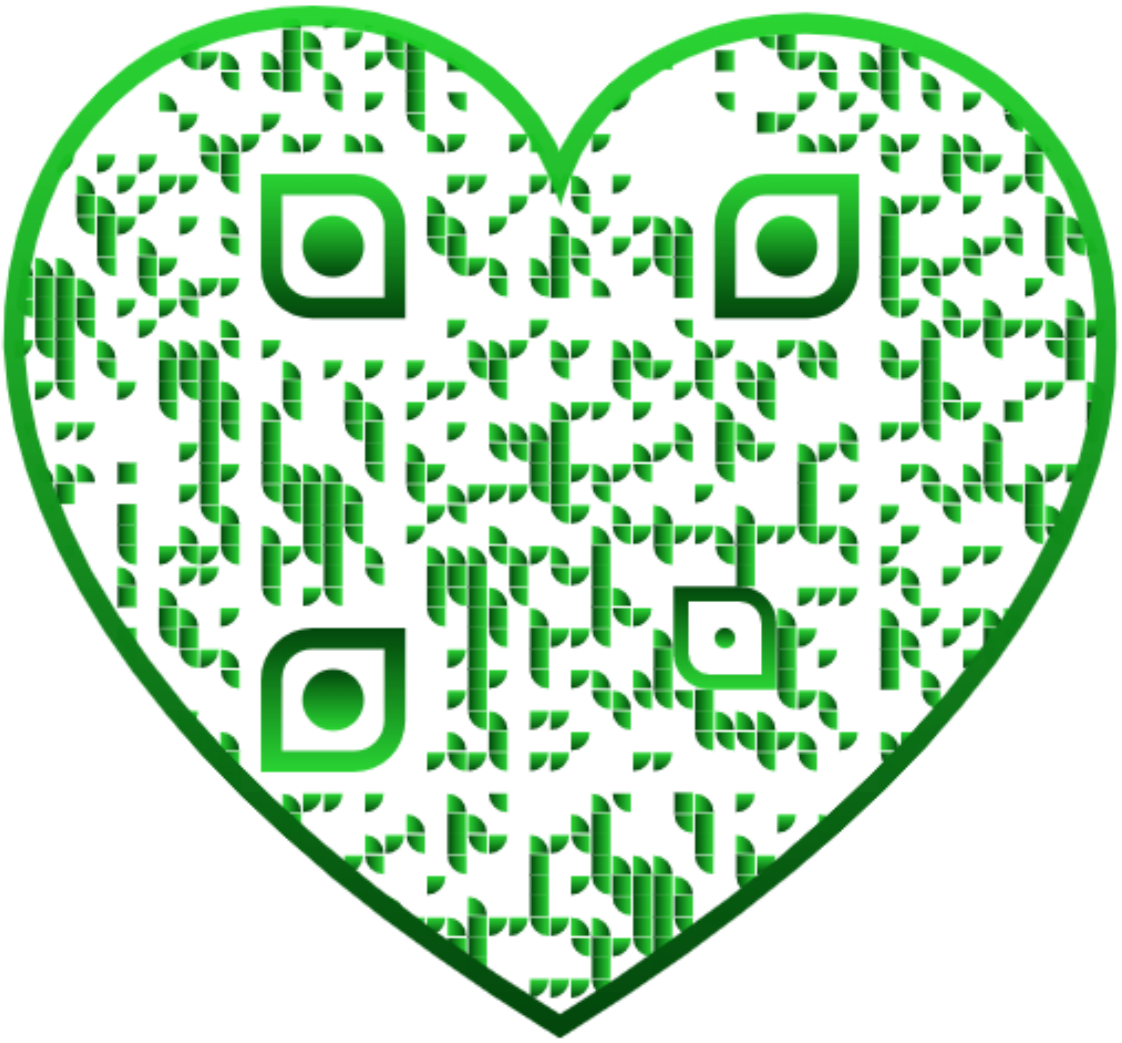

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HELLO AND WELCOME BACK TO *RHYTHM*...

I hope that we find you all keeping safe and well. In this issue we are delighted to welcome back the mighty Steve Gadd to the front cover of *Rhythm*, as he talks exclusively to Steve White about the early influence of drum corps and how his love for the discipline of rudimental drumming inspired his new book, *Gaddiments*, during lockdown.

"I honestly wasn't planning anything," says Steve. "I was just trying to get through the pandemic, keeping everything at a nice level so I would be able to play on the other side and not have to get in shape again. And what that did was take me back to when I was a kid – playing those rudiments in drum corps – and the book really developed by itself from there."

Read the full story from page 44, where you'll also find two exclusive sets of exercises from *Gaddiments*, as chosen by Steve White, and some very special tributes to the player who redefined the art of studio drumming.

Also in this issue, Josh Devine drops by to tell us all about his new band LEVARA's self-titled debut album (p60), and we catch up with Insta-sensation Greyson Nekrutman as he sets his sights on inspiring the next generation of drummers (p66).

Daru Jones fondly remembers the impact that Clyde Stubblefield and his drumming on James Brown's 'Funky Drummer' had on his own playing in *Tracks That Inspired A Generation (p22),* and one of Britian's most revered rock 'n' rollers – Clem Cattini - chooses his 'Six of the Best' (p98).

As always, Tom Bradley and the *Rhythm* reviews team are here to check out the latest gear from Planet Drum (p72), and Pete Riley and the rest of our teaching fraternity are on hand to help you become a better player (p82). Meanwhile, drumtech extraordinare Martin Oldham looks forward to the return of live music (p34) and there is also the chance to bag yourself a set of new drumheads, courtesy of Code (p17).

Enjoy the issue and we look forward to seeing you next time...

Louise King

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Contributing to this issue...

Steve White

A stalwart on the British drumming scene since joining The Style Council in 1983 at the tender age of 17, these days Steve combines his playing and session work with his role as an educator and clinician. Having been the youngest drummer to take the stage at Live Aid, which took place 36 years ago this month, he also performed at Live 8 with The Who in 2005. In this issue he chats to our cover star, Steve Gadd, about all things rudimental.

Which band do you wish you'd had the chance to see live?
"It would have to be The Beatles."

Rich Chamberlain

Raised on his dad's AC/DC records, Rich has been channelling his inner Phil Rudd since he was a nipper. While there's little danger of him laying down thundering grooves at a packed stadium any time soon, in this issue he talks to Josh Devine about his time touring the arenas of the world with pop sensation One Direction, as well as his new band, LEVARA.

Which band do you wish you'd had the chance to see live?
"I'd love to have seen the Sex Pistols first time around. Although I did get to see them in 2002, in what guitarist Steve Jones later told me was "the worst gig they ever played".

David West

Once a proud destroyer of single ply drumheads, since switching to jazz, David now caresses the drums as softly as a summer breeze. Part of the *Rhythm* team for nearly 20 years, he has interviewed many of his heroes, including Steve Gadd and Zigaboo Modeliste, and here introduces us to talents including Anna Mylee, Simone Odaranile, Joe Wong and Greyson Nekrutman..

Which band do you wish you'd had the chance to see live?
"I'd have to pick the original line-up of Montrose with the awesome Denny Carmassi on the drums."

Issue 301

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Six of the Best with Clem Cattini

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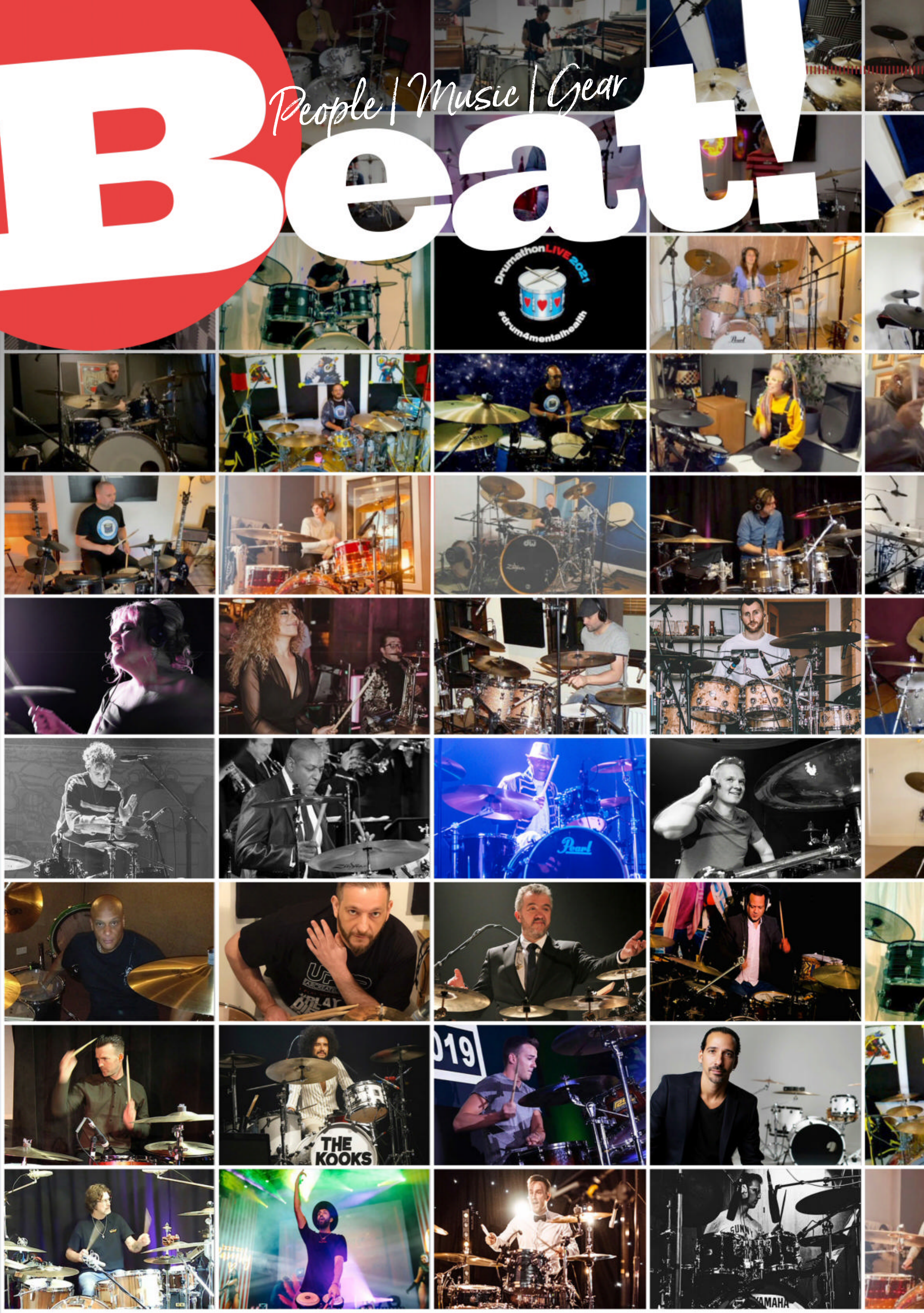


THE WEEK OF DRUMS

Leading names pick up their sticks for Drumathon 2021

Some of the UK's top drummers joined forces to tip a hat to the NHS, raise awareness for mental health issues and make a whole lot of noise as part of Drumathon 2021.

The event originated after Imagination drummer Errol Kennedy began quite literally 'banging the drum' during last year's Thursday night 'clap for carers'. Errol then drummed for 24 hours and with his wife, Bev, then organised Drumathon 2020, raising £45,000 for the NHS.

In May of this year, Drumathon 2021 featured an entire week of drumming, live-streamed from start to finish, in which drummers took on almighty 12-hour shifts of non-stop playing.

"The concept was to keep the beat going for as long as possible," says Bev. "We soon had a team of five, eight, ten... and then it snowballed. The result? Errol led 20 drummers in 2020 then 50 drummers in 2021, drumming for over 250 hours and not a beat was dropped."

This year's Drumathon involved some famous faces, with the likes of Coldplay's Will Champion, Nick Hodgson (Kaiser Chiefs) and Cherisse Osei (Simple Minds) among those involved. The event carried a simple but important message – to raise the profile of mental health.

"We believed there was nothing more important [than mental health awareness] and the drummers were unanimous in their support to raise funds for the mental health of our nation," Bev explains.

Will Champion adds: "What we're doing is really a drop in the ocean compared to the amazing commitment and work they've been doing on the frontline, looking after people who have suffered during this year. We're very grateful to do a little bit to help.

"Thanks to the NHS and all mental health charities who've been supporting us during this crazy time."

While many would be happy to take a breather and look back on the superb work that they have done, Bev and Errol are looking ahead to Drumathon 2022. "We've already had some amazing drummers volunteer for 12-hour sessions next year, and we're working on new, exciting ideas to involve the public, especially children, music schools and academies," they explain. "With offers of sponsorship, television coverage and social media plans in the pipeline, the beat goes on!"

But while the excitement continues, Bev is keen to emphasise the serious nature of their efforts.

"Mental ill-health affects one in ten people at any given time, yet the majority of the world's population can't access specialist support, and many struggle in silence," she says.

"More information and donations can still be made at www.drumathon.live in support of our five charities to ensure people experiencing mental health problems have access to the appropriate help, and can live free from stigma."

The power of drums

Bev and Errol Kennedy explain how time at the kit can improve your mental health

"There are so many positive elements to drumming – it is a skill, a technique, a challenge to be learned. It uses both sides of the brain and wakes up areas in the mind that promote focus and healing.

"The power of music helps your mind and spirit to fly and the discipline of keeping the beat – practising paradiddles and repetitive beats – is a great tonic and drive for keeping the body, mind, and brain healthy."

Introducing

ANNA MYLEE

The power player behind DORJA on taking hard rock into the future

Growing up in Belgium, Anna Mylee found her calling after seeing Dave Grohl in a Nirvana video.

"I was like, I don't know about these two, but THAT guy is having fun. That's what I want to do," she says.

Based in London, Anna's band DORJA has just released a new EP, *Persephone*, displaying her contemporary, creative approach to hard rock.

How do you craft your drum parts and grooves for DORJA?

I really like to think outside the box because otherwise I get bored. I have this slight proggy side of me asking for more complex challenges, but I also want to serve the music and not overplay.

If I hear the rhythm in my head to support the song in the right way, [then] what about if I use an unusual voicing to make it more interesting?

I love to play on the rim of the rack tom. I use it as a second hi-hat almost. On the song 'Silence', I've got this groove between the rim of the tom and the rim of the snare.

Sometimes we'd even change a whole section around the drums. I think that was the case for the next single, 'Dust'. The pre-chorus has a lot of rims in there – a little bit drum 'n' bass – but I made it more rocky by playing with dynamics.

What drums did you play on *Persephone*?

My Ludwig Classic Maple kit. That was the first time I recorded with it. I was super excited and it sounds just as good in the studio as it does live. The snare was a Black Beauty. Bass drum 24"x18", rack tom 13"x10", and then 16"x16" and 18"x6", so Bonham vibes all the way.

Do you see recording as a different experience to live?

Completely different, that's why I almost prefer the studio. Live is mostly about the energy – the energy you receive and the energy you give to your bandmates [and] to the audience. You really feel the excitement, the stress before going on and the satisfaction afterwards, like you've just had a workout.

The studio is purely creative. You're in the zone, you're not stressed out at all because you're so focused. It's about listening and deciding what is the best thing for this part? And you're free to try ten different things until you get the right one. It's this creative bubble and I absolutely love that.

What have been some highlights of your career so far?

I was on The X Factor backing James Arthur the night he won. I'd just come out of college, so that was pretty cool, to be there in front of millions of people watching on TV.

This album with DORJA is my first big release. We did everything ourselves, it was a lot of work.

And being able to work with all my bandmates – they're extremely talented people and we have so much fun every night onstage. **David West**

Key kit: *Ludwig drums, Evans heads Meinl cymbals, ProMark sticks, Tuner Fish Lug Locks*

LIBERTY

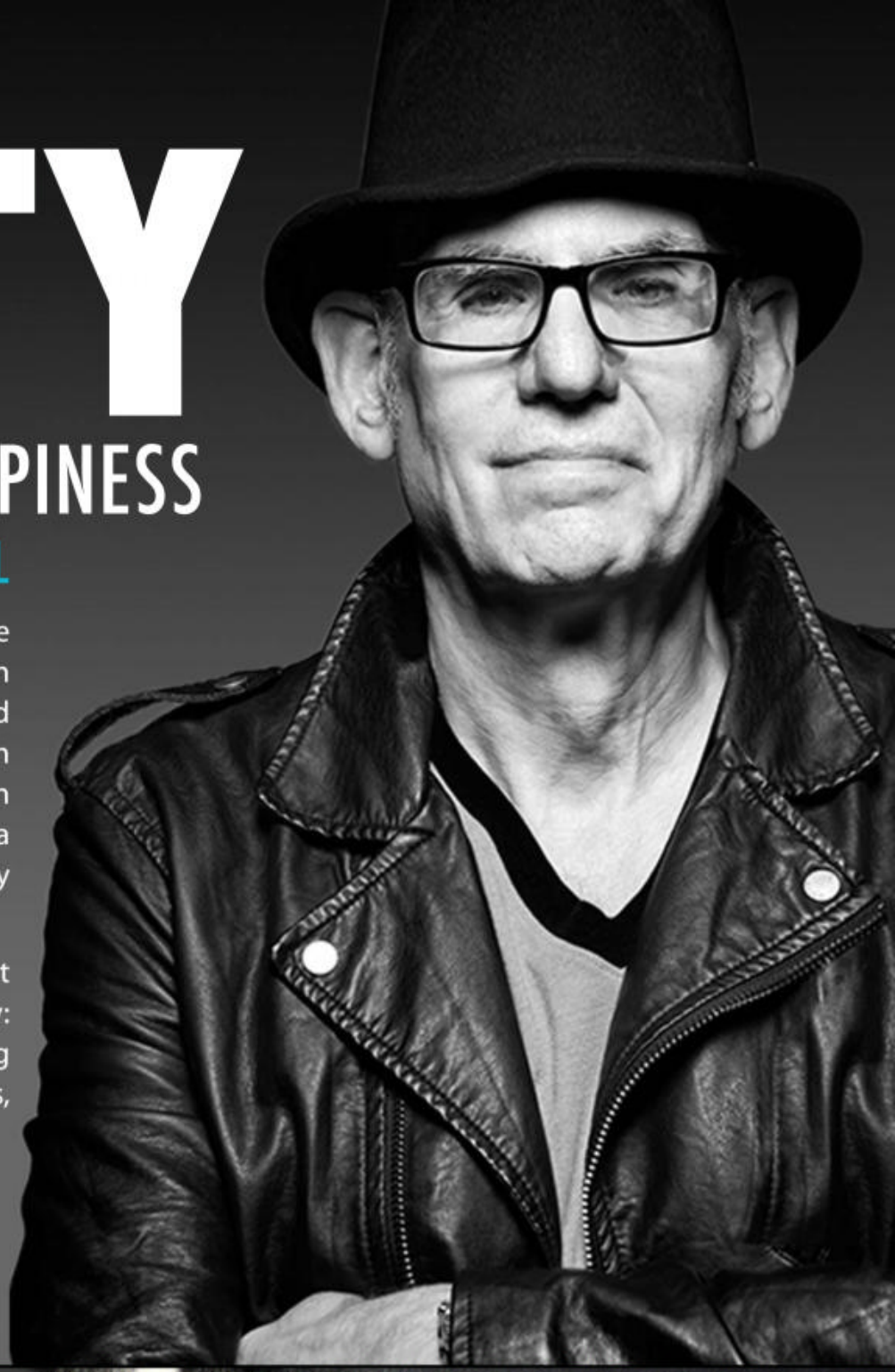
LIFE, BILLY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

BY LIBERTY DEVITTO • FOREWORD BY BILLY JOEL

For thirty years, Liberty DeVitto was the driving force behind one of the biggest pop artists of all time. This is his story: a tale of an Italian-American kid who followed his dream and attained unimaginable success, only to see it crumble before his eyes, and then ultimately experience a rebirth after passing through the fire of broken relationships, divorce, substance abuse, the death of a brother and a bandmate—and the pain of losing the persona the world knew as "Billy Joel's drummer."

In this compelling memoir, Liberty takes you back to his immigrant roots and ultimate settling on Long Island, traces a musician's journey: early childhood bands, a rise through the local club scene, wedding bands, building a career, his first tours, and then a juggernaut of success, excess, and stardom with Billy Joel.

Available in Print, eBook, Kindle and Audio Book Editions



IT'S ABOUT TIME

JEFF PORCARO

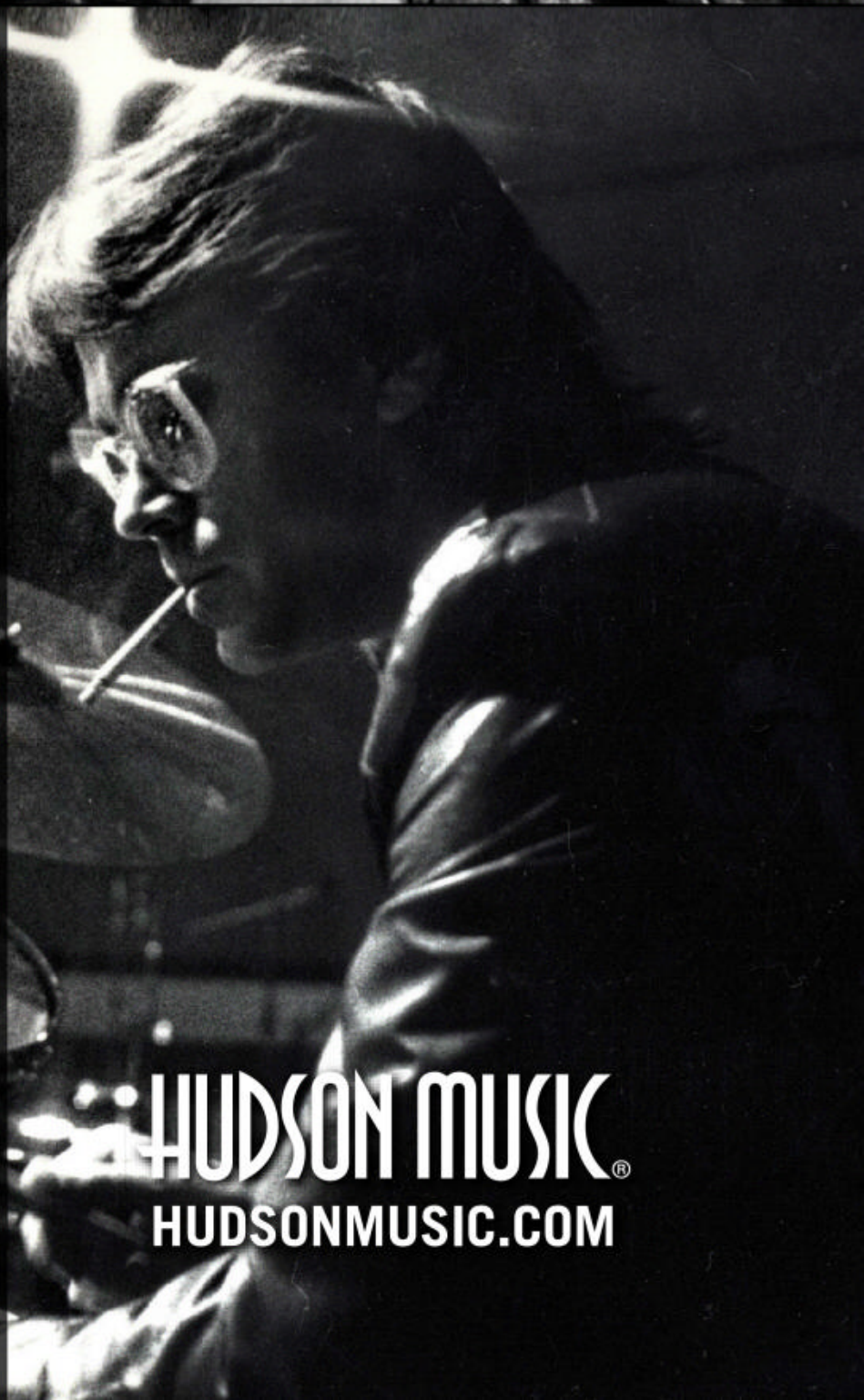
THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC

BY ROBYN FLANS

The LIfe Story of Jeff Porcaro. Author Robyn Flans provides insight into Jeff's musical career, including his childhood and formative years, his establishment on the L.A. scene, rise to stardom with Toto, and legendary career as one of the most sought-after studio drummers in the world until his tragic death in 1992 at only 38 years of age.

The author's own interviews with Jeff, plus exclusive discussions with other stars provide a fascinating and revealing portrait of Jeff's life—as well as how he was perceived by his fellow musicians. Bruce Springsteen, Donald Fagen, Ron Howard, Jackson Browne, Michael McDonald, Boz Scaggs, Richard Marx, David Gilmour, Peter Frampton, and many others share personal experiences and memories that recall Jeff's larger-than-life playing and personality in vivid detail.

Available in Print, eBook and Kindle Editions, as well as translations in Italian and French.



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SNAPSHOT

This Moment In History

Jason Bowld

Download Festival
Sunday, June 20, 2021

"It was a total out-of-body experience headlining Download. Although it strangely seemed like we had never been away, the show felt unreal – mainly because we thought festivals were dead and buried for this year and we didn't see the opportunity coming until a few weeks before. My drum solo plan went totally to pot, too, but for once I enjoyed a little bit of freestyling and the freedom of being at peace with wherever my hands and feet took me."

Bullet For My Valentine's new single, 'Parasite', is out now. For more information, visit www.bulletformyvalentine.com

Image: Tom Russell

VINTAGE DRUM SHOW RETURNS WITH BEATLES PERFORMANCES

Images James Cumpsty

We all know what a dark time the last 18 months have been for the music world with events canned left, right and centre, but finally, shows have begun to return and perhaps none is more welcome than Simon John's Vintage Drum Show.

An always-anticipated date on the drumming calendar, the mega event takes place on October 9-10 at the Standard Triumph Club in Coventry. Doors open at 10am on both days with tickets costing £10.

Organiser Simon John gives us the lowdown on what is billed as the UK's premier vintage drum show: "The show will hold over 30 stalls of drum goodness – accessories, hardware, cymbals and for anyone with deeper pockets, a complete vintage kit," he explains. "The show has the Vintage Vault, which is one of the largest kit displays with over 25 vintage kits from Ludwig, Slingerland, Premier, Trixon, Gretsch and anything in between."

The event promises plenty of vintage gear with a spotlight on Ludwig and Premier, but that's not all. There is also a Beatles flavour thanks to the presence of a pair of star performers – UK modern master Rob Brian and versatile veteran Mark Fletcher.

"Rob Brian performs on the Saturday and will be paying homage to all that is Ringo, playing to Beatles' tracks," says Simon. "Then on the Sunday, Mark Fletcher will be providing his interpretation of Beatles' tunes with brushes. Both performances will be at 1.30pm."

Plenty of stunning vintage drums accompanied by expert performances of classic songs – what's not to like?

"For me, the show has always been about having a great catch-up with drum buddies as well as being a place to make new friends," says Simon. "There is always a very relaxed, friendly vibe.

"I'm sure, due to what everyone has had to endure with the pandemic, most drummers are itching for it to return. I think we'll only realise how much we've missed it when we get together again on October 9-10."

For more information visit www.vintagedrums.co.uk.

Simon John and *Rhythm's* Geoff Nicholls

Sticky Wicket and Roy Holliday, former MD of Pearl UK

Image Jess Jones Photography

Introducing

SIMONE ODARANILE

The Go! Team and session star on dealing with pressure and not burning out

"I want to do everything. I'm quite greedy. I just want to play," says Simone Odaranile. Turning words into deeds, Odaranile's career spans being a member of The Go! Team alongside session work including *The X Factor* and playing with Rina Sawayama on *The Tonight Show*. It's a long way from the BIMM graduate who cycled around Brighton putting up flyers saying, 'Session drummer for hire'.

Did you originally want to do sessions or be a band member, or both?

I had a really great tutor at BIMM, Vinny Lammy – he plays drums for Mel C and the Spice Girls – and I really related to him. He was like, 'Look, I'm not a technical drummer, I can't do crazy rudiments, but I play drums for the biggest girl band in the world and that's just meat and potatoes, playing a groove and enjoying it'.

There are aspects of being in a band where it's family – you eat, sleep and travel the world together, and you have that bond with all those memories.

My sessions have been bigger projects, bigger gigs. Like, I never thought I'd do [*The Tonight Show Starring*] *Jimmy Fallon*. Sessioning can feel like you come in, do the job and go home, but I like that because that's the really professional side of things that I worked so hard to get to.

Is live television nerve-wracking?

I really do well under pressure and I enjoy being out of my comfort zone and pushing my boundaries. If things become overwhelming, I'd advise people to take a step back, pause and think, 'Yes, this is hard work, this is being a professional musician. It's a cut-throat industry, but look at where you are. You're playing *Fallon*, just enjoy it'. So I did. I loved every second of it.

Do you have any advice for someone starting to tour?

I really like a routine and touring is not a routine, it's early mornings, late nights, lack of proper home-cooked food, all of that stuff. People forget that, because when you're on Instagram you're just posting this amazing crowd photo or you spinning your sticks like an absolute idiot. You just post all the good stuff.

The advice I would give to anyone starting out is enjoy it. Come on, you're on a tour, how amazing and exciting is that? But it's really important to take care of yourself because you can burn the candle at both ends and completely exhaust yourself, which I've experienced.

I had massive anxiety attacks from lack of sleep. I was drinking way too much coffee, I wasn't eating and halfway through a gig I just collapsed. Luckily, I was with my band, they're like my family, but if I was sessioning and wasn't taking care of myself to the point where I collapsed in a gig, I'd be fired.

I love touring, but I've learned to make sure that I'm eating right and taking care of myself because playing drums is a workout. **David West**

Key kit: *Gretsch drums, Zildjian cymbals and sticks, Roland SPD, Gibraltar hardware*

Welcome back

Darby Todd

MARTIN BARRE, SESSIONS

While off the road during lockdown, the touring star made his dream album a reality

Having enjoyed a career so far that has incorporated styles as varied as jazz gigs, rock anthems with The Darkness and prog rock with Frost*, Darby Todd is now stepping into the spotlight with his ferocious new fusion album, *The Reality Of Zeros And Ones*. We find out how and why it all came together.

What drove you to make a solo album now?
I've thought about making an album for years. I'm predominantly a touring drummer – I do a lot of studio work when I'm home, but I'm always away from home and I knew that making an album would require a lot of time. It was never something I was going to be able to fit into a week while I was home and then another week a month later. When Covid struck, I just figured we'd never have this amount of time to ourselves again, so it was time to make my dreams a reality.

Marco Minnemann and Andy Newmark play on 'Beginning Of The End'. How did that come about?
I wasn't shameful about thinking, 'You know what, I'd love to have another drummer on this'. I just dropped Marco an email and said, 'I don't want to take all the drum solo on this song because people will get bored. Do you fancy just playing backwards and forwards?' I sent the email before I went to bed and I got an email back with a WeTransfer, and he was like, 'Does this sound all right?'

Andy Newmark has been a good friend of mine since I was about 18. I met him one day picking ride cymbals out at Zildjian. In fact, Andy got me on *The Lion King* years ago. I've got a lot of respect for Andy, he's a beautiful person and I just wanted to include him on the album. He took me under his wing as a young drummer and I wanted him to be part of it because he played an important role in my life as a musician.

You recorded your drums at your home studio?
I built a studio back in 2010. I was getting phone calls from people saying, 'Can you play on my record?' I'd say, 'Yeah, sure', and they'd go, 'That's great, do you have your own studio?'

More and more people were trying to do stuff without the big studios, so I realised it was important to add a new string to my bow. I've built the studio up over the last ten years and I've got the best gear I can get, from Neve mic preamps to Neumann mics.

It's great learning to do something other than play drums. I've been doing that for a long time now and it's something that has really helped keep me afloat when I can't go out and tour.

What drum sound were you after?
I knew that I wanted to have a very high-fidelity sounding drum kit. I wasn't going for a trashy, garage sound. I wanted it to be very modern, very clean, and that's why I brought my friend Jakob Herrmann in to mix it. I've done numerous albums in Sweden with him and he's done a fantastic job. Obviously, I tune them the way I want, so I had a vision for how my drums should sound, but he made it beyond my expectations.

Was it a challenge to organise all the collaborations remotely?
I put my version of 'Manic Depression' on there and it just sounds like four guys in a room together, but that's the furthest thing from the truth. Barry Dunaway, the bass player, was in Florida; Adam Wakeman was somewhere in England; Simon McBride was in Ireland – everyone is all over. I wanted it to have everyone's personality and I think it does.

If 12-year-old me was told that I'd make a record with Don Airey from Deep Purple, Justin from The Darkness, Per Nilsson from Meshuggah and Charlie Griffiths from Haken, I'd have been like, 'P**s off, that's not going to happen'.

Are you hoping to tour the album?
No [laughs]. I would love to play some of it live, but the project became such a bigger entity than I had ever planned – the final song has about 165 tracks of audio, from orchestras to layers of guitars and keyboards.

When I get to doing some clinics, I can see myself playing along to the songs, but a lot of it, there's too

Image Elayne Barre

“I’VE BUILT **THE STUDIO** UP OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS AND **I’VE GOT THE BEST GEAR** I CAN GET.”

much going on. If I went out and had 100 tracks of audio on a backing track that would be cheating. Never say ‘never’ but it would be a massive undertaking.

I’ve done playalongs for some of the songs. On my website you can buy three of them which I’ve completely transcribed note-for-note. I figured if I could create something that would challenge a drummer and they’d get something out of it, that would be good.
David West

Out now: *The Reality Of Zeros And Ones* is available now from darbytodd.com

Key kit: Pork Pie drums, Zildjian cymbals, Porter & Davies, Roland, Remo heads, Los Cabos drumsticks, Protection Racket cases, ACS in-ears, Baskey mat

Image: Sam Macon

Introducing

JOE WONG

The composer and drummer on realising his personal vision with organic sounds and vintage grooves

At the age of 11, Joe Wong sat down at a drum kit and knew instantly that he'd found his home. He became a touring musician in his teens, attended Berklee, moved to Los Angeles, and now hosts *The Trap Set* podcast, talking to drummers about the life experiences that shape them as players and people. He has written music for the Netflix series *Russian Doll*, *Master Of None* and *The Midnight Gospel*, and has just released his debut album, *Nite Creatures*, which is jammed with psychedelic grooves.

What was the impetus behind *Nite Creatures*?

It was the result of asking myself the question, 'Why are you able to write so much music to serve other people's vision, but you've not made a statement of your own, even though that's what you want to do?' When you're servicing someone else's vision, that person is the ultimate arbiter of whether or not the music that you create is working, and that can free you from your own neuroses, but it also means that you're not making a pure statement of your own.

Where did you record the album?

I recorded the drums and most of the rhythm instruments at Gatos Trail in Joshua Tree. For drums, I was trying to go for full takes and usually it was pretty fast because I wasn't aiming for perfection. I was aiming for a particular feel and just trying to be as musical as possible.

What kind of sound were you after?

The goal was to track the album in as organic a way as possible, meaning using only real instruments, all real strings and horns, letting mistakes be there, not using all of the editing capabilities that Pro Tools has to offer, etc.

Then the mix was done by Dave Fridmann. He produced the Tame Impala records, Flaming Lips, and was a member of Mercury Rev. He's a genius and I wanted to combine this concept of the natural recording with a very forward-thinking mind for the mix.

For the drum recording, I used Coles ribbon mics in the Glyn Johns configuration, a kick and a snare mic, and that was basically it. Lots of my favourite drum recordings were done with relatively simple mic set-ups. I think about all the great stuff that Rudy Van Gelder recorded and how great Art Blakey's or Elvin Jones's drums sound.

Have you been able to play *Nite Creatures* live yet?

We had two tours cancelled last year but we did do one really great gig. I got Matt Cameron to play drums, which was fantastic. He was slated to drum on one tour and Janet Weiss, formerly of Sleater-Kinney and currently of Quasi, was going to drum on the other tour.

I wanted to present this music as it was recorded with all live musicians, so it was about 20 people on stage. We did have two drum kits so there were parts of the show where I would go back and play with Matt, but I don't like singing and playing drums at the same time.

David West

Out now: *Nite Creatures* is available now from Decca Records.

Key kit: *Camco Oaklawn, C&C and Ludwig drums, Keplinger snare drums, Ludwig Speed King pedal, Istanbul Agop cymbals*

WIN!

CODE DRUMHEADS

Two lucky *Rhythm* readers could each become the proud owner of a set of Code's Signal Drumheads, a Code Laser Practice Pad and a set of Code Tone Adaptors worth more than £250.

Manufactured from a 14-mil PET film ply and featuring Code's Grip-Tight™ rim technology, the Signal Drumheads tune up quickly and easily, plus they hold their tune. The combination of a thicker single ply with the rim design gives the heads depth, projection and attack.

Phil Beaver of Inglorious says: "They are big, bright and beautiful" and Russ Gilbrook of Uriah Heep adds: "Signals make my drums ROCK!"

Also included in the prize package is a Code Laser Practice Pad, perfect to pop in a pocket to practice anywhere, plus a set of Code Tone Adaptors that can be used to shape the tone of most snare drums.

To find out more about these products go to www.codedrumheads.co.uk

To see Mike Heaton talking about and playing the heads, go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

HOW TO ENTER

Email your answer to the following question to info@beatsholdings.com

Who does drummer Mike Heaton play with?

A. Hug B. Cuddle C. Embrace

By taking part, entrants agree to be bound by the competition Terms & Conditions.

Terms & Conditions

1. Entrants must be aged 18 or over and live in the UK. 2. Entries close 11.59pm GMT on Wednesday, September 8, 2021. 3. Prize is as stated and is non-transferable and non-refundable. 4. There is no cash alternative. 5. One entry per person. 6. There will be two winners. 7. Winners will be notified by email 14 days after the competition closes.

Promoter: Beats Holdings Ltd, Repton Manor, Repton Avenue, Ashford, Kent, TN23 3GP

FUNKY DRUMMERS UNITE ON *BIG* NEW ALBUM

Image: Linda Del Rio

Why have just one drummer on an album when you can have six? If your answer to that question is, 'No reason', then the new album from Redtenbacher's Funkestra should be right up your street.

Big Funk Band features over 50 musicians in total and includes the prodigious talents of Benny Greb, Stanton Moore (above) and Keith Carlock. If that weren't enough, Francesco Mendolia (Incognito), Josef Hinterhölzl (Backwood 5) and long-standing Funkestra drummer Mike Sturgis are also featured on various tracks.

The vision for the *Big Funk Band* drumming collective comes from bassist, composer and bandleader Stefan Redtenbacher.

"25 years after the release of my first album, *Boozing Wizards*, I wanted to do something special and involve fabulous musicians from three different continents," he says.

"On my album *The Time Thief* , the focus was on tenor sax players, but this new album heavily features drummers alongside the core collective and many illustrious guests like guitarist Cory Wong and the Hornheads. This album is a wall-to-wall jazz-funk outing, just what you might expect with a title like *Big Funk Band*."

A hugely eclectic project, the album draws from a wide range of influences and features musicians from Austria, Cuba, Germany, Ghana, Italy, the UK, the USA and Venezuela. Stefan says the disparate nationalities of the players is an important factor as he views music as a unifying force against a backdrop of seemingly fragmented times and world events.

Asked what it was like to work with some of the biggest names in the drumming world, he enthuses: "In addition to their splendid performances, I was absolutely blown away by the professionalism of all the drummers.

"In the case of Stanton, Benny and Keith, they were doing their parts remotely, but they all went above and beyond to understand the music and ensure that I was happy with what they did. Each of them brings a sound and groove to the album that is really distinctive."

Big Funk Band *is on RSB Records and can be purchased through www.redtenbachersfunkestra.com or Bandcamp.*

Rhythm DIGITAL MAGAZINES

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- Go to www.rhythmdrumnetwork.com

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1. Multi-optional Precision Settings

An engraved scale enables fast and easy adjustment of the beater angle, spring tension, footboard angle and height. It also makes it simple to return to previous settings.

2. Unique Beater Bearings Solution

Both bearings hubs equipped with high speed ball bearings are mounted on a single precision ground hardened axis to provide unprecedented rigidity, stability, smooth action and offer long term operation.

3. New Lightweight Adjustable Beater

The new, patented beater design weighs only 88 grams and its compact structure allows it to be adjusted to a greater angle without the risk of it hitting the drummers foot.

4. Memory Lock

The 'memory lock' ensures the beater is correctly installed at the proper depth and angle in the beater holder every time.

5. Symmetrically Spaced Beaters

The double pedal's symmetrical axis means both beaters are the same distance from the drum at all times and achieve the same sound.
(Red Line = bass drum symmetry axis)

6. Patented Spring Tension System

The patented spring tension system is simple and easy to use. Its self-locking feature allows the spring tension to be set with surgical precision and does not require any additional tools.

7. Footboard Heel Bearing System

Each Footboard works on a double set of ball bearings to guarantee high lateral rigidity and smooth failure-free operation. The platforms are milled from a solid aluminium stock with special pockets on the underside to reduce weight.

8. Direct Drive

The high speed ball bearings, secured with special retaining rings, guarantee smooth transmission and long term trouble free operation of the direct drive system. The direct drive system also features three position length adjustment.

9. Variable Drum Pedal Action

The four point adjustment scale between the beater and the platform movement action allows drummers to change the characteristics of the drum pedal action.

10. Connecting Shaft

The movement of the beater from the slave pedal is accurately transmitted, without delay, to the main pedal through the solidly constructed drive shaft equipped with eight bearings. This design offers high rigidity, flawless smooth action with no backlash on the joints.

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The clamp arm and profiled central base are designed so that pedals can be easily mounted to bass drums with either steel or wood hoops in a wide range of thicknesses (range up to 22mm). It also makes it easy to alter the pedal distance from the bass drum.

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Model**RS**

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please feel free to check this out!

TRACKS THAT INSPIRED A GENERATION

★★★★★

Daru Jones

'Funky Drummer'
James Brown
(Released as a single in 1970. Included on the compilation *In The Jungle Groove*, 1986)
Drummer: Clyde Stubblefield

"I grew up with a really strict Gospel Pentecostal background and even though I heard a lot of music through the church, there was so much stuff that we were not allowed to listen to. It wasn't until later on that I discovered this whole new world of drummers and music and the funny thing is, the first time I actually heard 'Funky Drummer' it was as a drum break sample.

"Some of my favourite producers in the hip-hop community – Bomb Squad, Public Enemy, Dr. Dre – were using those sliced up breaks and, of course, 'Funky Drummer' is one of the most sampled recordings ever.

"When I did finally hear the original I was so impressed by the way Clyde Stubblefield played the track. It's a long song and it's the same dynamic for the whole nine minutes, but that dynamic is so important because it creates different layers. There is such a wonderful build up to the break and when it finally came it blew me away.

"Clyde's drumming – that repetition and that pattern over and over – that's the whole theory of hip-hop in the '90s right there. DJs were taking those clean beats and those loops, and they were using a lot of James Brown's music. The guys in the hip-hop community were then performing and trying to emulate not only the pattern of the DJ, but also trying to recreate those loops live with a band.

"As a hip-hop fan it was my dream as a teenager to play that music and I had to learn how to do it. It wasn't about playing lots of fills, it was about sticking to the

original composition of those tracks. Clyde had a big influence on me at that time, and the dynamic range and pattern on 'Funky Drummer' a big impact on my playing.

"Marco Soccoli, who used to take care of artist relations at D'Addario, gave me the most wonderful surprise when I was in New York one time. He told me to meet him at the Drummer's Collective and when I walked into the room I found Clyde sitting there!

"The two of us ended up doing a double drum thing together and it was the most beautiful experience. We stayed in touch after that and it was wonderful to be able to tell him how important 'Funky Drummer' had been to me.

"The funny thing was, he told me he didn't actually like the song and couldn't understand it when people started sampling the drums.

"Of course, Clyde never knew that what he was recording that day was going to be a 'thing'. But when you hear James turn him loose on the track, Clyde just sticks to that groove and the repetition of that pattern as instructed, and it's a heavy moment. Clyde was always so humble about it, but who thinks to play a groove like that? It's not your regular 4/4 pattern with those syncopations and ghost notes.

"For DJs and producers the attraction was the repetition, and I'd just like to give praise to Breakbeat Lou from the Bronx here. Lou was responsible for finding so many breaks from that specific time when artists were giving drummers their moment to shine with solos like that.

"For me, it's not just the pattern that Clyde played that makes this track so special, it's his unique energy and the fact that it comes from his heart and his soul. All of those things inspired and resonated with me, but then it's great to see how we can interpret something ourselves and make our own version of it. That's what keeps it fresh and it's so important for young drummers to revisit this history, because it keeps drummers like Clyde alive. Respect that legacy and pay homage to where it came from because if we lose that foundation, what have we got to learn from?"

Image Eric Ahlgrim

Images Emily Dolan Davies

DUSTING OFF THE POST-COVID COBWEBS

Emily Dolan Davies prepares for a return to live performance

It's happening! The world is slowly opening up and that means getting back to live music – and I'm excited. Although I have to admit that riding shotgun to my enthusiasm is the stark realisation that my live chops are definitely not where I left them at the back end of 2019. I've been waiting for this moment for so long and I don't want my rusty wrists to get in the way of enjoying every single second I'm back on stage. So, here's what I'll be doing to get back in shape:

Getting out of my comfort zone...

To get me back up to the level needed for playing live, I will be pushing myself out of my comfort zone with added gusto and really digging in rather than just playing exercises for the sake of it. I'll be stretching my ability in every direction so that gig time will be a breeze and I can fully enjoy it.

Powering up for performance...

The art of performance is something I definitely have fallen out of practice

with as there really is no substitute for playing in front of a real, breathing audience.

I'll be setting up a camera and performing the songs for my forthcoming shows like they've never been done before. Then I'll watch back the footage just to check that everything is translating the way I want it to.

Boosting my energy...

I think getting my energy levels back up to where they need to be for live work will be the most difficult thing. This isn't just about the show itself, but also the peripheral parts of the job, such as loading up my car, driving to shows and the toll that late nights can take.

To boost my energy levels I will be doing some serious training. I'll be boxing to bring up my cardio levels, which will help with performance, and building up my strength to make lifting my gear less taxing.

I'll also be doing my practice sessions late into the night, conditioning myself back into the wonderful gigging lifestyle.

Enjoying every moment...

Coming back to live shows is going to be so incredible and I can't wait! There may be difficult moments of readjustment, just as there have been with everything else, so remember to be kind to yourself and make sure to enjoy every one of those moments that we may have taken for granted in the past.

www.EmilyDrums.com
www.EmilyDolanDavies.com

Rudiment Of The Month

Drag paradiddle #1

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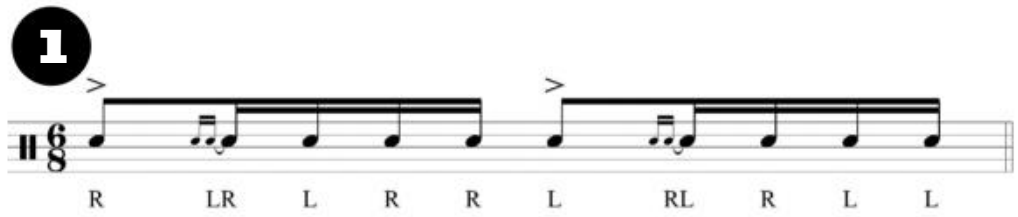

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The drag paradiddle is a particularly technically challenging rudiment as it features double strokes played at two different rates. The slower rate is the regular diddle at the end of the figure and the faster rate is the drag played after the accent. The basic figure with its regular notation is shown in Ex 1.

The essence of the figure is probably most easily mastered if it's regarded as a double paradiddle (Ex 2, bar 1), with the second note played as a double-stroke and at twice the rate of the other notes (Ex 2, bar 2). Moving between these two bars will really help to hone the accuracy of the two subdivisions.

The rudiment can also be played accenting the first two right or left hand notes (Ex 3), the way the double paradiddle often is, and you could then try moving these accents to the toms or cymbals while keeping all remaining notes on the snare.

OFFBEATS

DRUMMER'S ODYSSEY

Drummer's Odyssey Drum Camp returns live and in person this October. The event, which was held virtually last year, takes place in Bristol on October 23-24. Debbie Knox-Hewson (Charli XCX), Eddy Thrower (Lower Than Atlantis) and education guru Mike Johnston are this year's expert tutors on hand to share wisdom throughout the camp. Tickets for the full weekend cost £340. More details at www.thedrummersodysseycamp.com.

TRAVIS DRUM SALE

Fancy owning a piece of Travis Barker's history? The Blink-182 drummer has listed a tonne of gear on Reverb.com among which is the OCDP kit used in Blink's 'Adam's Song' video. But you will need deep pockets as it is listed just north of £18,000. There are plenty of cheaper options though, including electronic kits and percussion.

TAYLOR TOURS

Roger Taylor is getting back on the road for a 14-date tour this year. The Queen legend will be promoting his new record, *Outsider*. The dates kick off on October 2 in Newcastle, before he heads to Manchester, York, Cardiff, Liverpool, Norwich, Bath, Bournemouth, Plymouth, Nottingham, Bexhill, Guilford, Coventry and London.

ROGER HAWKINS RIP

Roger Hawkins, renowned session drummer, songwriter and member of the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, has died. Friend David Hood broke the news, saying Hawkins had passed away at his Alabama home after suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, among other conditions. He was 75 years old.

CHILIS RETURN

Chad Smith has revealed that new music is on the way from the Red Hot Chili Peppers. In an interview with Q104.3, he said, "I can say this, we're making a record, we're making new music. It's very exciting and I don't know when it's coming out but we can't wait for people to hear it and we can't wait to perform for people."

FIRST LOOK

SHINY NEW DRUM STUFF TO LUST AFTER

PEARL PRESIDENT SERIES

This year Pearl has released a host of exciting new gear in celebration of its 75th anniversary. You will have seen some choice selections in the First Look section of previous editions of *Rhythm* already, but we'll also be bringing you full reviews in due course, starting with the re-release of the Pearl President Series in our next issue (*Rhythm* 302).

Pearl was founded in 1946, in Tokyo, by Katsumi Yanagisawa, who started by producing music stands. By 1953 he was making kits, marching drums, timpani, cymbals and percussion instruments. During its 75 years the Japanese company has brought many well-known products to the drum world, not least the Masters, Session Series, Masterworks Series and Eliminator pedals.

Introduced in 1966, Pearl describes The President Series as "the first professional drum set to carry the Pearl name". The original kit used hermetically pressurised phenolic shells, which gave it a unique character. The new kits promise to feature the tonal articulation and feel of the original with a modern-classic retool.

The new President Series for 2021 is available in two lines. The first of which, The President Series Phenolic, aims to reproduce the characteristics of the original by using the classic phenolic shells. This limited-edition version is available in just one finish, Pearl White Oyster, and comes in one size configuration; 22"x14" bass, 13"x9" and 16"x16" toms. Only 100 kits will be made available.

The second version is The President Series Deluxe, which uses Lauan for its build material. These 6-ply (7.5mm) shells are available in the same configuration as the Phenolic but also a smaller 20"x14" bass, 12"x8" and 14"x14" toms setup. The Deluxe comes in two flavours, Ocean Ripple and Desert Ripple and the wrap finishes are a result of a collaboration with Delmar USA.

Both versions of the President Series feature original Battleship Lugs, Pearl Script Badge, classic bass drum logo, adjustable internal tone mufflers, felt bass drum muffling strip, shell-mounted cymbal holder and adjustable, gull-wing-style bass drum spurs. Each kit is supplied with a 75th anniversary certificate and matching 14"x5½" snare drums are available separately.

CONTACT
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FIRST LOOK

SHINY NEW DRUM STUFF TO LUST AFTER

Pearl Matt Halpern Signature Snare
Price: £739
With each element meticulously designed by the Periphery sticksman, this 14"x6" Black-on-Brass Signature snare drum features a 1.5mm shell, MasterCast die-cast hoops and black and brass STL Swivel Tube Lugs with striking yellow gaskets.
www.pearldrum.com

2. Rohema Groove Cubes
Price: TBC
This interesting concept allows for a creative approach to practice. The set of nine beechwood dice show various musical patterns to combine rhythms for bass drum, snare drum and hi-hat in addition to 'fill cubes' and a 'tempo cube'. Just roll the dice to see what to play!
www.rohema.de

3. Evans Heavyweight UV Dry
Price: £31.90
Featuring two plies of 10mil film for maximum durability, compressed attack and a wide dynamic range. With a 3mil Reverse Dot, Precision-drilled dry vents and Evan's patented UV coating, this head is designed for the heaviest of hitters.
www.daddario.com

4. Gewa G5 e-kit
Price: £3,445
The G5 is a simplified version of Gewa's flagship G9 Workstation kit. The kit features 10"x5", 12"x5" and 14"x5" toms, a 14"x5" snare and a 18"x14" bass drum, in addition to two 14" crashes, an 18" ride and 14" hats.
www.gewaelectronics.com

5. LP Tambo-Rings and Tambo-Stick
Price: From £11.30
Add some jingle to your sound with LP's new Tambo accessories. The Tambo-Rings are available in 6" and 14" options with black sand or stainless steel finishes.
The 14" solid maple Tambo-Stick was developed with Stanton Moore and uses two pairs of steel jingles.
www.lpmusic.com

6. Minuendo Lossless Earplugs
Price: £119
The world's only 'variable passive HiFi filter earplugs' from the sister company of Soundbrenner, these sleek plugs boast adjustable attenuation from 7-25dB, 11 sets of eartips and a natural, flat frequency.
www.soundbrenner.com

7. SlapKlatz Refillz
Price: £9.95
Representing a more affordable and eco-friendly option for replenishing your Slapklatz Pro case, the Refillz pack includes 12 gels of three sizes and is available in black, clear, pink and alien green.
www.slapklatz.com

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FIRST LOOK

SHINY NEW DRUM STUFF TO LUST AFTER

1. Drum Sound and Drum Tuning book
Price: £23.99
Written by Rob Toulson, this book aims to give the reader a better understanding of acoustics and develop creative approaches to drum tuning and professional-level recording and drum mixing.
www.routledge.com

2. Ludwig Burgundy Pearl
Price: From £3,045
Ludwig's new Burgundy Pearl wrap embraces the classic Ludwig aesthetic with incredible elegance. Available across both the Classic Maple and Legacy Series, the limited-edition finish option is available for 2021 only.
www.ludwig-drums.com

3. Arturia Audiofuse 8Pre
Price: TBC
The AudioFuse 8Pre is a dual-mode interface and ADAT expander that boasts eight channels of premium analog audio, rock-solid sync, USB-C and optical connectivity. This could be the perfect studio addition.
www.arturia.com

4. SJC Jay Weinberg 'First Blood' Practice Pad
Price: £64.99
Sharpen your skills on this playable piece of art from Jay Weinberg and SJC Custom Drums. This 10" diameter pad features an 8" playing surface, non-slip backing and is stand-mountable.
www.sjcdrums.com

5. Pearl Travel Timbales
Price: £507
Pearl has expanded its range of travel percussion with these new Travel Timbales. The black lacquer-finished drums keep the standard 14" and 15" diameters but both use a shallower 4" depth. A stand is included and carry bags are also available.
www.pearldrums.com

6. Tuner Fish Cymbal Felts
Price: £9.99
Add some flair to your kit with these colourful cymbal felts from the folk at Tuner Fish Lug Locks. Supplied in packs of ten, the felts are available in red, orange, purple, blue or mixed bags.
www.tunerfishluglocks.com

7. UFO Low Volume Cymbals
Price: From £46
Added to an existing line up of low-volume cymbals including 14", 16" and 18" crashes, a 20" ride and 14" hats, the 10" splash and 18" China allow for a more complete practice setup.
www.ufocymbals.com

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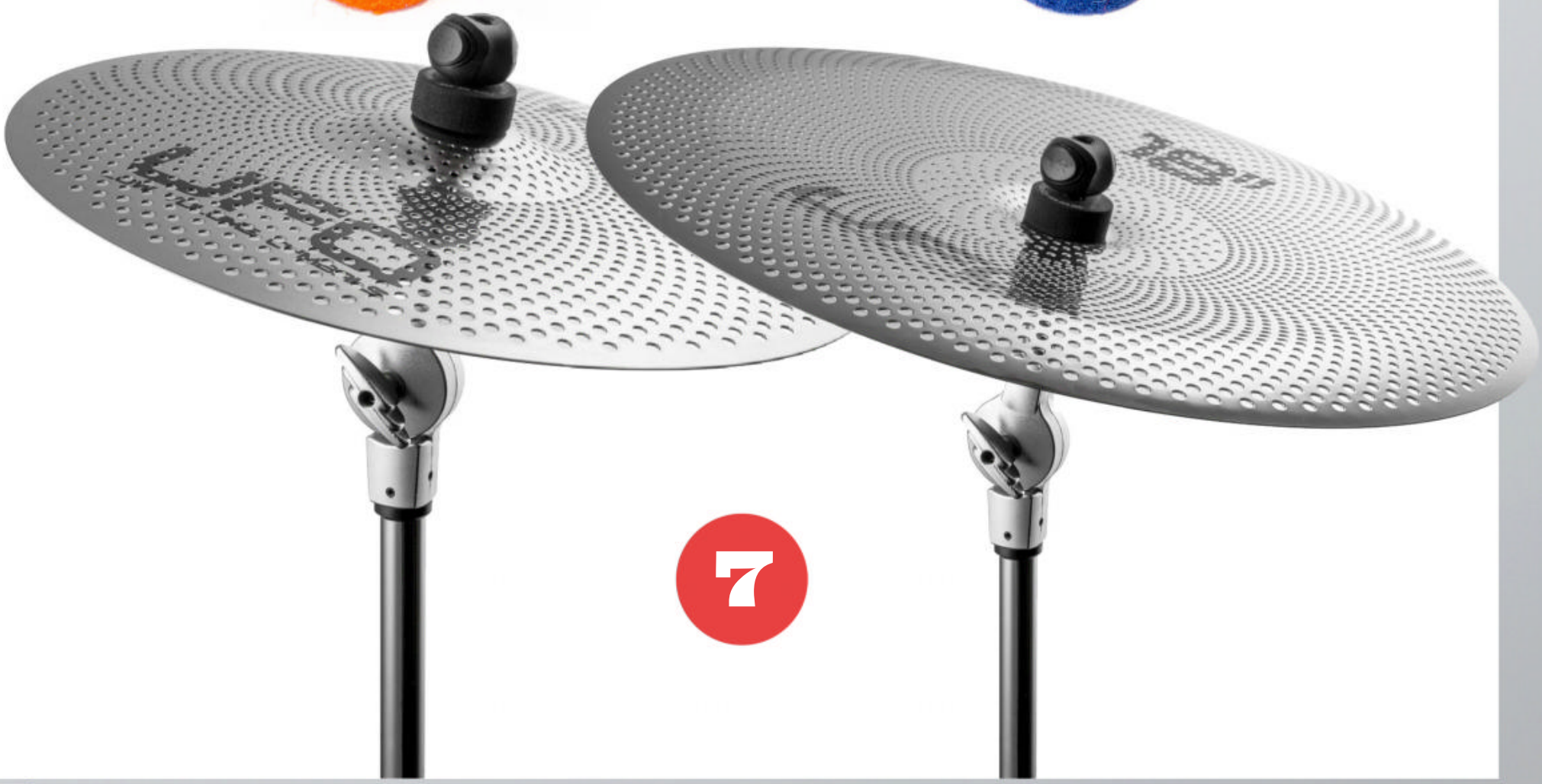

LUDWIG STAINLESS STEEL KIT

Ludwig's brief foray into the expensive world of stainless steel led to one of John Bonham's most memorable kits

Words **Geoff Nicholls** | Images **James Cumpsty**

Vintage CIRCA 1977

The 1970s was an era of big changes and experiments in the drum world. Ludwig had great success with its Vistalite acrylic shell drums and followed it up with this striking series in stainless steel.

The brand had for long led the pack with its metal shell snare drums, although these were mostly chrome plated brass or aluminium 'Ludalloy'. Stainless steel was an expensive and heavyweight departure which Ludwig along with other companies – notably the French Asba – experimented with briefly as stadium rock shows grew bigger each year.

As a lifelong Ludwig devotee John Bonham was keen to gig with his mega-sized stainless steel beauty which he did from 1977 up until his death in 1980. The kit will forever be associated with the epic Led Zeppelin Knebworth concerts of August, 1979.

Bonzo played a special 26"x14" bass drum while this one is the catalogued 24"x14". But the two toms, 14"x10" – which Bonham alternated with a rare 15"x12" – and 18"x16" would have kept the great man happy. Absent is the metal shell SupraPhonic snare drum, Bonham's being the deeper 14"x6½" 402 model. Ludwig did not include a stainless steel version at the time.

The kit featured here belongs to Tristan Head, owner of Drumattic, a vintage sales, hire and repair shop located in Somerset.

"This kit is from around 1977, while the series was first offered in the 1976 catalogue," Tristan reveals. "Shells are 1/16" polished stainless steel, fitted with internal screw-up dampers. The kit would originally have come with a SupraPhonic 400 and heavy-duty Atlas hardware.

"Following a long term of neglect, I restored the kit several years ago and it has proven to be one of our most popular hire kits for that 'big sound'. It's now part of Drumattic's selection of vintage backline and hire kits and has been used on many studio recordings.

"Let's face it, it also looks stunning, especially with the Remo Starfire head I put on the front, which is why it also gets hired out for various video shoots and shows.

"It's one I also like to take to drum shows. You may have seen it at Simon John's Vintage Show in 2019. Don Powell from Slade played the kit when it was on display at the London Drum Show a few years back. He was telling me he used to have one in the late 1970s and it's one of the kits he misses the most.

"As this kit is part of our backline and hire, I do – unlike a lot of the kits I own – get a chance to play it. It's my go-to for classic rock that needs some 'size' behind it! When you sit behind this kit, something just feels amazing. You can't help busting out 'When The Levee Breaks' or practising those Bonham triplets."

Simon John's Vintage Drum Show

IN ASSOCIATION WITH SIMON JOHN'S VINTAGE DRUM SHOW
www.vintagedrums.co.uk

1. CLASSIC LUGS
Ludwig's superlative Art Deco lug design was, and still is, commonly found in the larger size (here) and a smaller version fitted to smaller drums.

2. POINTY BLUE AND OLIVE BADGE
A complete change from the historic keystone, the blue and olive badge signalled Ludwig's move into the modern era and was seen throughout the 1970s.

3. DOUBLE TOM MOUNT
Ludwig's distinctive twin ratchet holder is sturdy enough, but there'll be tears if you ever forget your ⅞" spanner or dedicated hex wrench.

● WOODEN BASS HOOPS

While the shells are metal, the bass drum hoops were Ludwig's usual black-painted wood with an inlay of Sparkle Silver wrap.

● POLISHED REFLECTIVE EXTERIOR

Ludwig promoted its lustrous new drums with the legend: 'The stinging dry sound of stainless steel shatters the air'.

● CURVED BASS DRUM SPURS

Sure Grip retractable spurs were available in ¼" square section steel (as here) and later in ½" section. They are angled slightly forward to prevent creep.

NEED TO KNOW

HONORING BONZO
John Bonham played his stainless steel kit on Zeppelin's final tours. In 2006, Ludwig reissued 100 authentically sized replica kits in his memory.

STAINLESS STEEL
Stainless steel is an alloy that contains over 11 per cent chromium, which allows the finish to be polished like a mirror.

DRUMATTIC
Based in Radstock, Somerset, Drumattic buys, sells, rents, repairs and restores vintage drums, cymbals and accessories. Visit: https://www.drum-attic.co.uk

"WHEN YOU SIT BEHIND THIS KIT, SOMETHING JUST FEELS AMAZING. YOU CAN'T HELP BUSTING OUT 'WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS' OR PRACTISING THOSE BONHAM TRIPLETS."

OWNER, TRISTAN HEAD

TECH TALK

Drum geek Chic

Bass drum gets a hole in it with six songs to go? It's all in a night's work for **Martin Oldham**, the man keeping Nile Rodgers & Chic on the beat

How have the last 18 months been?
If I had to use one word to sum it up, it would be 'challenging'. My business suffered financially as did a lot of others, but my friends in the industry all tried to stay as positive as they could. I did enjoy the time at home – extended time with the family and my young daughter were priceless moments that I won't forget.

Are you starting to see light at the end of the pandemic tunnel?
Yes, things are coming back slowly. The industry is very eager to get started under the correct and safe protocols. I have been busy with various artists in studio sessions and kit maintenance etc.

What did you miss most and are you excited to get back out again?
I have missed the travel, the people, the shows and the life experiences. It was a huge lifestyle change for me and most touring professionals, going from being away 150+ days a year to spending 18 months in one place. While fun and relaxing at first, it became very *Groundhog Day*-esque.

The excitement has now turned into making sure that everyone is fully prepared for what is about to happen. When the industry starts up again properly I think it will be very busy!

How did you become a drum tech? Did you always want to be one?
I became a drum tech after a successful stint as a professional drummer. I wanted to be a drummer first and foremost, but when I left the band I didn't want to lose all the passion that I had built up for drums and the industry. A year or so after leaving, I took a job at John Henry's, where I continued to develop my knowledge of the instrument, industry and my future career.

While there, I worked many different gigs as a tech in a multitude of different facets; live, studio, TV, radio, corporate etc. Each of these different scenarios – coupled with my frequent use of live/studio drum teching in my holiday time and days off – gave me a solid understanding of what it was like to be a tech. I left John Henry's in 2011 and started my company, DrumTechSupport (DTS).

I'm not sure if anyone starts out wanting to be a tech. I think we all start out as musicians and wanna-be professionals. Luckily for me, I felt I'd ticked that box. I was content with the success I'd had and didn't yearn for anything further in the playing world. I realised I had just as much to offer, if not more, as a tech – definitely more now, after all the years of doing both and crucially, I enjoy it more.

What was your first tech gig?
I'd have to say the one that launched it all for me was Friendly Fires. That gig, although not the first, was definitely a changing point in my life. That was the gig that made me leave John Henry's, start my company, and set me on the path to where I am and where DTS is today.

What is the biggest challenge of being a tech?
I'd say that changes. When you are younger I think the biggest challenge is adapting to the ever-changing conditions, personnel, environment, travel and your own learning.

When you are older and have more commitments it's about the balance of how you deal with the ups and downs of the industry and try as best as you can to be there for everyone. Spending so much time away from loved ones can be very hard, especially with young children. It's easier now with FaceTime etc., but

you must remember, if you are away a lot you must be doing something right as you are employed!

As you grow as a tech it's very important to remain humble and realise that old cliché of 'every day is a school day' is true. Be nice, always. And always be on time or early!

What is the best thing about the job?

I think it's different for everyone and it changes with age. Seeing the world and being paid for it is a great bonus. Staying in nice hotels, days-off in places you thought you'd never go, meeting people from different cultures, broadening your view of the world, making friends across the planet, meeting your heroes, working on music that will last forever and make people happy, being able to provide for your family through a career you love. The list goes on...

And the worst thing?

Bizarrely, some of the previous answer! When you are experiencing some of the highs, sometimes all you want are some home comforts. Being away from home, away from family – in my case away from my five-year-old daughter Molly and my wife, Sherry – away from friends, and the ones you hold dear. Missing *big* life events – marriages, funerals, and birthday parties. Sometimes a general feeling of missing out can be tough.

What is the biggest onstage nightmare you've ever had?

That has to be back in 2010 when I was working with Gorillaz Sound System drummer Paul Stanley-McKenzie. We were doing a headline show at a European festival and during the show, Paul put the bass drum beater through the batter head with six or seven songs left of the set – a drum tech's worst nightmare!

However, something that I've always done at festival shows, to be friendly, is talk to the local backline hire company guys who are on-site during the day, whether we are using our own gear or hiring it in.

That particular show, we were using hired backline so I knew where the equipment was stored. I also knew that the bass drum was independent of everything else on the kit, no cymbals or toms attached to it. As soon as I realised the problem, I ran to the backline store behind the stage, grabbed another bass drum, ran on to the stage and swapped ▷

out the entire bass drum. The show continued as normal. Something I'll always remember.

What's the funniest/craziest thing that you've seen on a tour?
What goes on tour stays on tour, I'm afraid.

What is the number one 'no-no' for any drum tech?
Complacency. If in doubt, check. Check the wing nut on the 18" crash cymbal, check the spring on the bass drum pedal, check the memory lock on the hi-hat stand.

What's the biggest lesson that you've learned as a tech?
Focus on the gig, the equipment, and the drummer. The most important hour or two of your day are when the band is on stage. You may have nothing to do, but focus. On a bad day, you'll have to sort something during the show. On a good day, the show will happen flawlessly for you.

Talk us through a typical day in the life of a drum tech on a tour
It depends on the job. Studio – early start, setting up equipment, tuning, line checking, working with the engineers and producers, working with the drummer, having option drums ready, long periods of inactivity but being ready at a moment's notice.

Live – early start, unloading gear, waiting to set up, setting up, cleaning and basic equipment maintenance on a daily basis, tuning for the space, line checking, getting ready for the show, showtime, pack down, loading gear, bed. Then repeat.

TV – early start, set up equipment, tuning if required and not miming, camera checking, working with the drummer, long periods of inactivity but being ready at a moment's notice. Corporate work is a mixture of all of those but in nicer working clothes.

What advice would you give to any aspiring drum techs?
Make sure you want to be a tech. It's not for everyone. It can appear glamorous, but the days can be very long. Some schedules are hard on the body with sleep deprivation, long travel distances and a sometimes pressured work environment.

Do you have any essential maintenance tips for our readers?
One tip I'd like to pass on is to be tactile with the instrument you are working on. The more hands-on you can be, the better. Check for rattles where they shouldn't be, movement where it should or shouldn't be – tight but not over-tight, etc.

Cleaning the drums and hardware is a good way of focusing on all of the moving and non-moving parts of the kit. If you think about all of the screws, washers, wing nuts, felts, stand feet, tom arms that we, as techs, have to keep in perfect working condition, it pays to be tactile and get hands-on.

What's the first thing you do when you get home after a long tour?
Kiss and hug my wife and daughter, get lovingly mauled by our dog, then rest. Usually, time at home for me is short-lived, spending 200+ days on the road is tough, so family time is precious. Rest is important, family time is important, and time for me, usually on the back of my Harley Davidson, is also important. It's a difficult juggle. Welcome to my world!

What is the biggest change that has affected the drum tech's job?
In all forms, the rise of electronics in the industry has had a huge effect. The reliance on MIDI and playback systems for bands is massive. The 'hybrid' nature of kits is very prevalent. Certain items – eg. SPD-SX – have given drummers multiple voices from one source and it's our job as techs to keep up with the ever-changing landscape of how electronics are being integrated into the acoustic instrument.

Some of my biggest challenges have been working with people like Andy Gangadeen and KJ Sawka whose knowledge of that world is such that you learn so much just by observing what they do.

The drummer that you are teching for is struck down with a 24-hour illness and you're asked to fill in for that night's sold-out show – what is your immediate response?
I know someone who could do it, but it's not me! My list of contacts is comprehensive enough that I think I should be able to suggest someone – or know someone who could suggest someone – to make the gig happen.

Drum Up Support

Drummers Martin has worked for include (in no particular order): Ralph Rolle (Chic), Charlie Watts (Rolling Stones), Simon Phillips (independent), Ash Soan (independent), Beanie (Rudimental), Andy Gangadeen (Chase & Status), KJ Sawka (Pendulum), Matty Brown (Plan B), Questlove (John Legend), Alexis Nunez (Kooks), UK Drum Show (all performing drummers), Fabio DeOlivera (George Ezra), Andrew McLean (Grace Jones), Debbie Knox Hewson (Charlie XCX), Perry Melius (Billy Ocean), Kaz Rodriguez, Oli Wiseman (Anne Marie), Gary Powell (The Libertines), Mike Mangini (Zildjian Day), Tonez (Tinie Tempah), Jack Savidge (Friendly Fires), Paul Jones (Labrinth), Jamie Morrison (Stereophonics), Nicolas Viccaro (Dave Stewart), Ian Palmer (Ghosts), Skully (Razorlight), Benny Calvert (Killing Joke & Kelis), Pete Cater, Steve White, Pat Petrillo, Daisy Palmer, Leo Taylor, Earl Harvin, Paul Stanley-Mckenzie, Chris Sharrock, Marcus Mumford, Tim Weller, Chris Prendergast and many, many more.

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The beating heart of football

Drummers, road crew and industry boosted by participation in Euro 2020 commercial

Some 190 drummers were involved in the making of a recent Ladbrokes' TV campaign celebrating Euro 2020 and the joy of live sport and entertainment.

Developed by creative agency Neverland and music supervisors Siren Music, and directed by Sam Brown of Rogue Films, the 60-second commercial evokes the anticipation and tension that football fans feel watching a penalty, set to the thumping soundtrack of 'Rock & Roll Queen' by The Subways.

As the player backs nervously away from the ball, viewers can hear his heart beating in a metronomic rhythm. The camera then reveals that it isn't his heartbeat but a crowd of drummers filling the stadium. The film subsequently cuts to drummers in a variety of situations in which fans would typically watch the game, including a family living room, a pub, a bus stop and across the rooftops and streets of a city. The ad builds to a crescendo as the player runs towards the penalty spot, and as he makes contact with the ball, the drumming track kicks back in.

Josh Campbell was behind the arrangement and compositions, Ash Soan played on the arrangement and Mike Dolbear, who previously organised 1,000 drummers for the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, coordinated the drummers and drumming features of the film.

"Within 24 hours of the ad being posted for this project there were over 1,000 applications," explains Mike. "We did ten days of filming, 10-18 hours a day, at multiple locations and it was wonderful to see the drum industry, the backline companies and the road crew back at work, as the live entertainment sector has suffered so much during Covid.

"Everyone was so impressed by the enthusiasm and excitement of these players who were happy to stay up all night playing drums!"

To show its support for the music industry and the invisible army behind the scenes, Ladbrokes has partnered with #WeMakeEvents, an industry collective raising awareness of the challenges being faced by over 700,000 professionals in the entertainment industry.

SNAPSHOT

This Moment In History

Drumlines

Stu Warmington talks to Sergeant First Class Nakama Ayami about her time in the JGSDF

Images Courtesy of Ayami Nakama

After spending some time in the Big Apple, we now head east to somewhere that I've always wanted to visit and has been on my travel list for many years. Where is that? I hear you ask.... Japan! It's just a shame that these are virtual visits as this would've been a great journey for my British Airways Frequent Flyer Account.

The Japan Ground Self-Defence Force Central Band (JGSDF) was established in 1951 under the auspices of the National Police Reserve, forerunner of the JGSDF, and has been performing ever since. Throughout the last 70 years it has remained one of Japan's most illustrious wind ensembles.

The band reports directly to the Minister of Defence and has taken part in The Special Guard of Honour to welcome state guests and official visitors to Japan, which amounts to more than 1,400 guests from over 100 countries. For this the band was presented with the 'Prime Minister Special Award' for merit in 2015.

The band's principal activities include regular concerts, chamber concerts, national tour concerts, the JSDF Marching Festival, promenade concerts and so on. The band has participated in numerous international events, including the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup, as well as having staged joint performances with 'The President's Own' United States Marine Band; The United States Army Band 'Pershing's Own'; 'West Point Band'; and at international tattoos in South Korea in 2002, 2004 and 2011, Finland in 2014, Scotland in 2017 and Russia in 2019.

In addition, the JGSDF has been conducting a music education project for the Papua New Guinea Defence Force Band since 2015.

Sergeant First Class Nakama Ayami (pictured left and above) is a drummer/percussionist in the JGSDF Central Band, currently in charge of protocol and the band's library.

Ayami started drumming at the age of 12 and became a recruit in the JGSDF in 2003. She has worked with the 4th band, 15th band, and in 2009 was appointed a drummer with the JGSDF Central Band.

A highlight for me was meeting the Corps of Drums from Her Majesty's Royal Marines. In 2017, the Central Band participated in The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. It was the first trip to Europe for the band and that one month definitely expanded our perspective, and we were transfixed by the astonishing performance of The Royal Marines Band. We were inspired by their experience and have started to incorporate their stickwork ▷

She had been a fanatic of JSDF bands since her school days, so becoming a musician of JGSDF was her dream from a very young age.

At what age did you start drumming and how did you get into it?
I started at the age of 12 in the school's concert band. The teacher of the band, my mentor, gave us opportunities to learn various types of music from old folk songs to jazz, from Enka (Japanese ballads) to modern wind ensemble pieces, all of which increased my love of drumming and music. At the same time, my teacher was strict on the basics and I had been practicing single stroke rolls for a long time – as if it were forever – in anticipation of joining the ensemble.

What or who was your biggest drumming influence?
I feel very fortunate to have had many fantastic experiences and have been influenced by many musicians.

COFFEE BREAK CHALLENGE – FUJI-SAN

For Ayami's video go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

DRUM: YAMAHA

Shell: 6-ply maple 14"×12"
Batter Head: Remo Ambassador Coated
Snare side: Remo Ambassador
Finish: Natural lacquered
Snare wire: Puresound Concert C1412

▷ into our drill displays, which is not easy but it is strengthening the *esprit de corps* of the group.

What made you originally want to join the JGSDF?
I was very fortunate that the bandmaster of my junior high school's concert band was a retiree of JGSDF Central Band. I saw the band for the first time when I was a beginner percussionist. I can still vividly remember their impressive performance.

I became a devoted percussionist at high school and I remember knocking on the door of the bandmaster's house to ask how I was able to be become a member of the JGSDF. The rest, as they say, is history!

Which other Drum Corps would you most like to play with?
It is definitely, without doubt, the Corps of Drums from Her Majesty's Royal Marines.

What is your proudest drumming moment to date?
I have so many proud moments but participating in the Society of International Rudimental Drumming (SIRD) was like a fresh start in life. It is a great drummers' community, sharing their own traditions with each other, learning drumming together and, most amazingly, developing the international rudimental drumming field together. It is our great honor to be part of the SIRD and we look forward to seeing where this can take rudimental drumming in the future.

What is your most embarrassing moment?
Oh! I have countless embarrassing moments. It does not matter how much we prepare, they still happen. For example, when playing the cymbals, and you add one wrong note – just behave as if it were correct at the time and reflect on it later.

What has been your most memorable gig and why?
It was my very first outside performance with the Central Band in 2009. I personally love African and Latin music and one of my bosses had discovered this affinity, and I played the djembe solo at a guerrilla performance in the centre of Tokyo. At the time, I was very nervous to start my new life with so many talented musicians in the band but the experience allowed me to be who I was.

How has Covid-19 affected your job?
The pandemic has hugely affected us. Many concerts were cancelled and it prevented us from performing and enjoying music with audiences at concert halls. However, through digital performances and events, the band has been seen by more people than we could have ever imagined and I cannot wait for the post-Covid life, which should be filled again with love and dreams.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?
The Special Guard of Honour is one of the most important missions of JGSDF Central Band, when we play ceremonial pieces for the state guests and official visitors representing the JSDF. Even though the band has taken part in this over 1,000 times, we stand at each ceremony with dedication, professionalism and pride.

Do you have any advice or a quote you'd like to share with us?
'Don't think. Feel!' We tend to worry about skills or techniques, but the key is to remember why we play the drums. Music is free, enjoy your drumming life!

Next Issue: James Ballantine and The Household Cavalry

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"drumming is the life I've been dreaming."
Hit Like A Girl 2021 Spokesperson Liza Chepkovskaya
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"drummers are powerful women."
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"drumming is the heartbeat."
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"music can help you express yourself in a way that sometimes words can't."
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"overcome obstacles with every hit."
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"explore, examine, expand and always be yourself"
Hit Like A Girl 2021 Spokesperson Aarifah Rebello (aarifah)
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"such a beautiful power... to dream of something and then create it"
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"drumming is about freedom and power."
Hit Like A Girl 2021 Spokesperson Drummer Subin (Independent)
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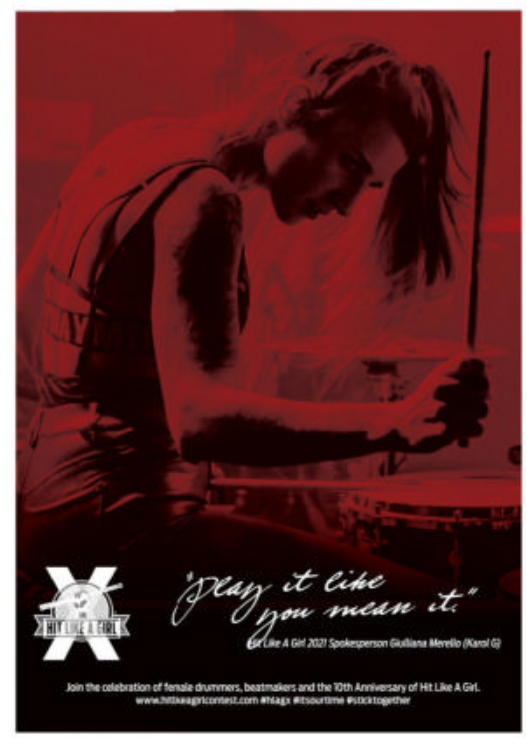
"play it like you mean it."
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The session legend on going back to the early influence of drum corps and how his love of the discipline of rudimental drumming inspired his new book, *Gaddiments*

Image James Cumpsty

Steve Gadd

In conversation with Steve White

Image James Cumpsty

My first real introduction to Steve Gadd was at one of the legendary evenings I spent with Gary Wallis, when we were both around 12 years old, at his mum and dad's flat in London's East Lane. Armed with a plate of cheese sandwiches and a stereo, we would have these eternal competitions deep into the night, with me playing him Buddy Rich stuff and him playing me Billy Cobham stuff.

Then one day Gary put on this album called *The Leprechaun* by Chick Corea and I can honestly say I was left speechless by the groove, the complexity and the artistry on that record. But it wasn't Billy Cobham and it wasn't Buddy Rich – it was Steve Gadd. To this day that record still blows my mind, and the incredible thing is that it was just one of hundreds of releases that Steve was playing on at that time, redefining what it meant to be a studio drummer.

His versatility on some of my all-time favourite records is astounding – from his jazz work with Roland Kirk, playing with Chet Baker and Chick Corea, to his pop work with people like Al Jarreau. So many artists have benefited from his virtuosity and his genius. What drummers like Hal Blaine and Earl Palmer did for music in the '60s, Steve did for pop music in the '70s and '80s. But not only has he proved himself to be the most fantastic pop drummer, his virtuosity as a jazz player and as a fusion drummer is also incredible. For me, he really is the consummate musician – and one who always plays for the song.

You get that knowing smile when you hear a track that works so perfectly musically and you go to the credits and see that it's Steve Gadd on drums. I actually just repurchased one of my all-time favourite live albums, where Steve is playing with Chuck Mangione, and there is a version of 'St. Thomas' on there that is absolutely stunning. I think Steve would probably have been around 20 years of age when he played on that record, but the maturity, the clarity of his playing and his musicality is phenomenal. What a career he has had! He really is up there with the all-time greats.

The legendary occasion when Dave Weckl, Vinnie Colaiuta and Steve Gadd all played together at a tribute to Buddy Rich is a classic moment in drumming history. Three of the greatest players ever, all in a line, showing off their chops – and rightly so because it's a tribute to Buddy. And then when Steve when comes in with that 'Crazy Army'-inspired rudimental solo the whole thing goes to another level. Again, it's a wonderful demonstration of his talent and of his absolute confidence as a musician.

I've been lucky enough to meet Steve on a number of occasions over the years, but it wasn't until we were both involved in Ian Palmer's *World's Greatest Drummer*, along with Pete Cater, that I really got to spend some quality time with him. We had a day's rehearsal at Bell Percussion and Steve was so gracious, taking a genuine interest in our music, the players we were into and our opinions about the performance we were all going to be doing together at the event. It's always great to see that in such an iconic player.

The opportunity to talk to Steve for *Rhythm* about his book, *Gaddiments,* has been an honour. Covid has been such a tough time for all of us, but it's been lovely to hear how Steve has coped and come through lockdown with an air of positivity, and how something that started out as a way to keep his hands in shape suddenly took on a life of its own. *Gaddiments* resonates beautifully with me at this point in my career, both as a drummer and as an educator, and Steve's enthusiasm about the whole project has left me feeling incredibly inspired. So, without further ado, let's hear from the man himself and find out how this new venture of his all took shape... **Steve White**

Image Ebet Roberts/Redferns

YAMAHA
STEVE GADD

18+

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“YOU GET THAT KNOWING SMILE WHEN YOU HEAR A TRACK THAT WORKS SO PERFECTLY MUSICALLY AND YOU GO TO THE CREDITS AND IT’S STEVE GADD ON DRUMS”

STEVE WHITE

Image James Cumpsty

Steve White: First of all Steve, congratulations on the new book. It's fantastic and the patterns are wonderful – challenging and incredibly musical. I'm finding them quite addictive!
Steve Gadd: That's great to hear, thank you. When the pandemic started and I found myself stuck at home, I wanted to find a way of keeping my hands and chops in shape, so I put sticks with rubber tips all over the house and just started playing. The more I did, the more I got into it and the ideas started to evolve. I found myself doing old things in new ways and I got excited about sharing them, because they were things that I hadn't done before. I hope people have fun and love trying all of this stuff out, because I really enjoyed putting it all together.

Was there the nucleus of an idea for a book before lockdown, or did it come about simply because you had the time?
I honestly wasn't planning anything. I was just trying to get through the pandemic – keeping everything at a nice level so I would be able to play on the other side and not have to get in shape again. And what that did was take me back to when I was a kid, playing those rudiments in drum corps, and the book really developed by itself from there.

The examples all hang together so beautifully, almost like a piece of music, and I can't praise that aspect of it enough. Going back to your roots, can you tell us a bit about that path you took as a young drummer?
Something that so many of my colleagues say is that a young drummer in Britain joins a band and then learns to play, whereas in America a drummer learns to play and then joins a band, because you have a much more traditional journey over there with the rudiments and drum corps. Is that something you got into when you were young?
I started in drum corps when I was in grammar school. I was already taking lessons by then so I had started on my reading. The greatest thing about drum corps for me was the camaraderie and the challenge of trying to play the parts exactly like the guy next to you, in terms of the cleanliness of the execution of the stroke and the stick positions.

We were a team wanting to make the section the very best it could be. It was never about any one person trying to draw attention to themselves, it was about making the unit as tight as possible and I loved that. I relished the fact that you had to listen so hard to the guy next to you and try to fit everything in in the same way. And when you locked it in, it was just great.

Working on the ideas for this book I got back into loving the rudiments and all those little exercises again. I actually used to write parts for the drum corps, trying to come up with different ways and creative approaches to playing the rudiments, and that's really the basis of how *Gaddiments* came to be.

For a long time now I've been aware of a wonderful picture of you at around nine years old with Gene Krupa (below). You'd already been playing for a couple of years by then, but what was going through your head as a very young drummer being in that kind of company and what do you remember about those times?
I just loved the opportunity to see those guys close up at the Ridge Crest Inn in Rochester. It was a tour stop for acts travelling between New York and Chicago and my dad would take me along to the shows. I was able to sit right next to the bandstand and watch Gene Krupa and all those great players from the side. I

Image Courtesy of Steve Gadd

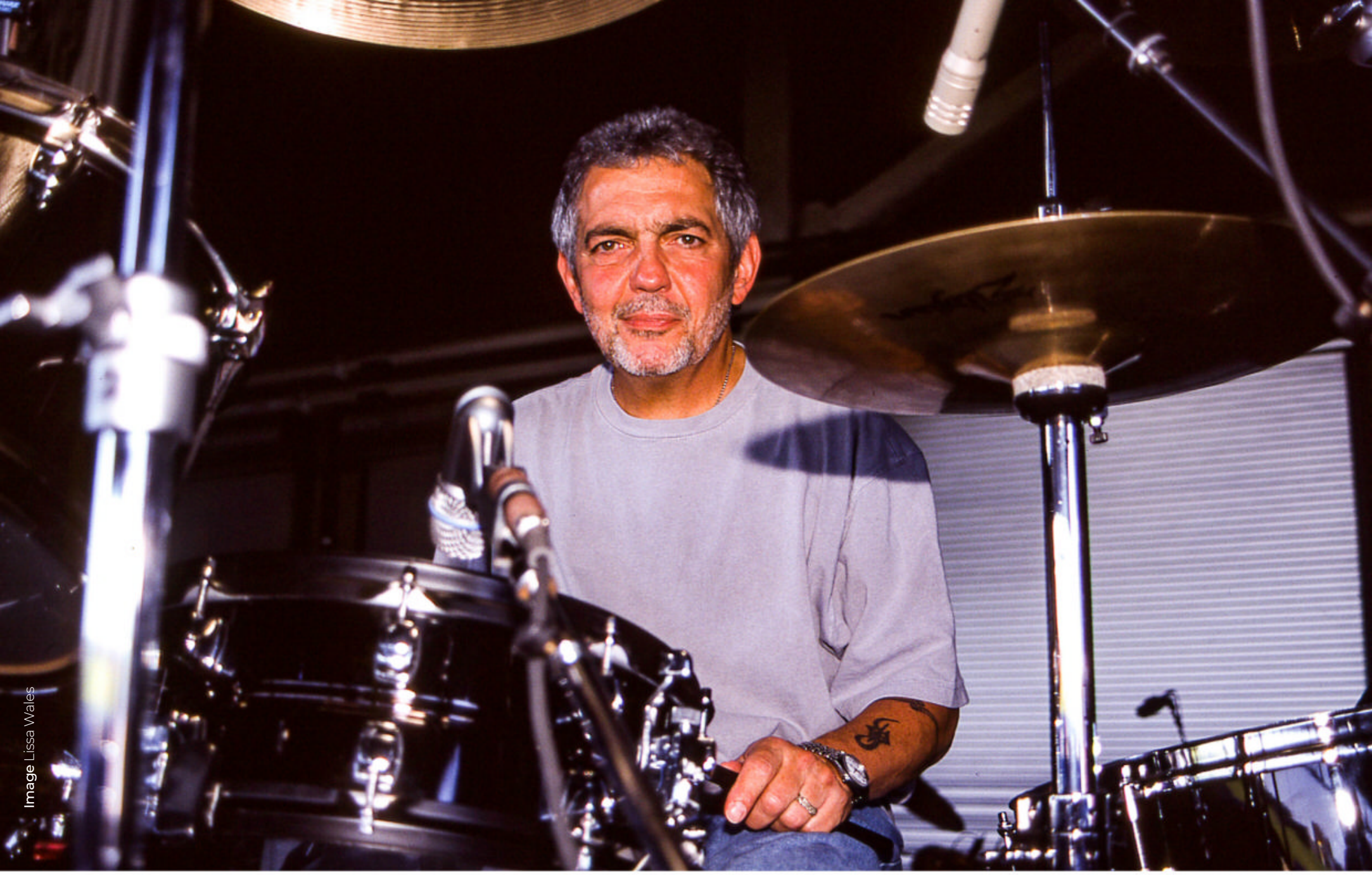

Image Lissa Wales

loved listening to the music, but being close to the drummer like that meant that not only could I hear, but I could also see what they were doing with their hands and feet. And there were so many great artists that played at that jazz club – Gene Krupa, Carmen McRae, Max Roach, Art Blakey, Papa Jo Jones, Dizzy Gillespie, Kai Winding, Oscar Peterson... I was studying the drums by then and all those people were incredibly gracious – they nurtured us young musicians and would invite us to sit in with them. It was a fantastic way to learn.

What an incredible opportunity! Can you tell us a little bit about the teachers you studied with as a young drummer and how they influenced you? One person you mention in your *Up Close* video is Bobby Thompson, who is well known for teaching rudimental drumming and for that particular left-hand traditional grip technique that is credited to Les Parks.
I didn't actually study with Bobby myself, but I studied with guys who knew his approach. With that particular grip the little finger of the left hand is tucked in to support the ring finger – the thumb and forefinger are rotated to the top, almost touching, and they act as the fulcrum.

We spent hours practising technique with the corps. We would stand in front of mirrors, so that we could see what everyone was doing, and when one guy had the technique a little bit better than the rest of us, we'd all try to get to that level by watching him. The players in the senior corps would teach us juniors and it really was like playing sports with that mentality of wanting the team to get better.

It's great that the older guys were handing stuff down to the younger guys with such a sense of camaraderie.
And even though those senior rudimental drummers weren't playing for a living, they were serious players. They loved it all – competing on the weekends with the corps and teaching us. It was a great outlet for everyone and I was so lucky to be around people like that - I really had a good time.

That background – the discipline, the regularity and the routine of marching bands – is a style of drumming that I adore, and it fits perfectly with so many of the things that I feel validate me as a drummer and my ethos as a teacher.

Even though we don't have quite as much historical drum corps culture in the UK, we are catching up and we do have the wonderful Scottish tradition of pipe band drumming. Did you ever look at other rudimental styles, like the Scottish pipe band or the Swiss Basel?
I love all of that rudimental stuff, but it's not always easy to study it by ear if you don't have a teacher. As I got into writing this book, I actually met people who are into the Scottish drumming and have shared some ideas about it. So yes, I am really interested in all of that stuff and am looking forward to learning more.

"I DON'T THINK THAT I WAS EVER LOOKING FOR THE RUDIMENTS THAT GUYS WERE PLAYING, I WAS JUST LOOKING TO KNOW HOW THEY DID WHAT THEY WERE DOING"

MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Steve White chooses one of his favourite sections from *Gaddiments*...

SIX-STROKE ROLL

"The six-stroke is one of my favourite rudiments and these variations work equally on pad, snare drum or developing onto the drum set."

MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Steve White chooses another of his favourite sections from *Gaddiments*...

FLADIFLAFLAS

"These are lovely to play and, as with so much of this book, I started with the pad and practiced diligently. Then I began to think about bass drum ostinato and also playing the right hand on a different sound - like a cowbell or ride cymbal - trying a repeated samba style bass drum pattern."

How much did your early experience of rudiments and drum corps, and then your army service, influence your route to becoming a professional drummer? You were so young when you started out.

Well I never did just the rudimental thing, I was always doing that alongside a bunch of different stuff – taking lessons, learning to read and watching those jazz groups with my dad. What that resulted in was me taking something from one genre and applying it to another.

For example, I would take rudiments from the corps and try to apply them on the drum set, but not necessarily by just playing rudimental parts on the kit. It was more a case of me trying to incorporate the rudimental style, but at the same time not trying to emulate the style of the rudimental guy, because I wanted to play like Gene Krupa or Buddy Rich. Basically it was me trying to figure out how the stuff I had learned over there, I could use over here, if that makes sense?

Absolutely! And, as you have demonstrated throughout your career, you've been able to take those fundamentals and incorporate them so musically and creatively into your playing on so many classic records.

What would your advice be and how would you encourage young drummers to think about incorporating rudiments into musical playing?

Well, rudiments are just a combination of different stickings – some of them work well for the kit, some not at all. But what it's really about is trying to be comfortable around the drums and figuring out the different ways of how the stickings are going to help you get from where you are to where you want to be at the end.

It was the same process with this book actually, because what I tried to do is come up with patterns that are in phrases – alternating between left and right so that both sides are being utilised. So by writing everything in phrases, what you've got is a combination of technical things that I hope will help people develop their chops and also strengthen their left hand by using it in combination with the right.

I find that one hand helps the other.

Tributes to Gadd...

On September 13, 2003, Steve Gadd was honoured by the Avedis Zildjian Company at the second American Drummers Achievement Awards (ADAA) at the Berklee Performance Centre in Boston. *Rhythm* was lucky enough to be in attendance at the star-studded event and here we revisit some of the memories and tributes that were shared on that very special evening by Louie Bellson, Eric Clapton and Chick Corea.

LOUIE BELLSON

The late, great double-bass pioneer on meeting Steve Gadd

"It goes way back to 1962 when John Beck, Steve's drum teacher, asked me to come do a clinic in Rochester, New York. When I got there, John said, 'Lou, are you still having two sets of drums on stage and inviting students to come up and play?' And I said, 'Yes, I'm still doing that'. He said, 'Okay, I've got a young man here, a student of mine, who can play anything that you guys out there are playing. He reads like a hawk, can play any style and he's a marvellous human being'. I said, 'Well, I don't want to meet *him*!'

"We got up on the bandstand, John Beck introduced me and I introduced this young man, and I asked him what he wanted to play. He said, 'You take it'. And I said, 'No, you take it', and he started a tempo. I knew the minute that he hit the cymbals and the drums that I was going to listen to somebody special. He went through that clinic with me and I have never forgotten it. I said to him afterwards, 'Young man, are you going to make this your vocation?' And he said, 'Yes I am, I want to play drums and I want to play music'.

"A couple of years after that he went to New York City and all I heard was 'Steve Gadd, Steve Gadd, Steve Gadd' from everybody. We all marvelled at this newcomer that had come in and done his homework. He knew where he came from, he knew where he was going and he knew about Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, Max Roach, Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Shelly Manne, and he added something different to the drumset. If we say 26 rudiments, he went up to 30 and 35, and he established what we call identification. And once a drummer has identification he has it covered.

"I can't tell you how much I respect this young man – he is truly a great artist and a great human being."

Image David Redfern/Redferns

You can practise the phrases and then leave some open bars – perhaps play the phrase for four bars, ad lib for four, and then go back to the phrase. So it's not just about the rudiment technically, it's about the phrasing and how those rhythms – once you have them under your belt and are comfortable with them – can be played for four bars and then you can solo, all the time keeping them in mind. And when it comes to solos it's so important to think in phrases. Of course everyone will have their own journey, but that's the way I did it.

Your track record in the studio is second to none and the parts you created were not only technically phenomenal, but they did really turn so many drummers on to technique and rudiments.

Obviously, '50 Ways To Leave Your Lover' is probably one of the tracks you are most famous for, but there's another tune that I absolutely adored as a young drummer and that's 'Lenore' from Chick Corea's *The Leprechaun*, with that beautiful open-handed hi-hat pattern – or at least that's how I interpreted it.

The patterns you were playing were, I felt, wonderful and very sophisticated and I'm interested to hear if you think that the freedom to express yourself in the way that you did then is still apparent in modern music? Or do you find that everything is a little more closed down now with programming and the way people digest music?

Are those dynamics and that subtlety maybe lacking today?

I don't know if they are lacking, but it's definitely different. I wouldn't want to use the word 'lacking' because I try to be open to whatever the new music is and what I am doing. For me, it isn't about trying to take something technically that I did before and make it part of what I'm doing now. It's about being present and in the moment with whatever I'm playing and allowing it to be whatever it needs to be by making it work musically.

The music has and always will dictate for me what I am going to do on the drums. Some music, some artists, some producers require a more technical type of thing, others something simpler and the job is supporting that and finding what is right for the music. And that's how you come up with something new. The new thing might be something very simple and unlike all of the other things you've done technically, but ultimately the challenge has always been about serving the music.

Amen! You have inspired so many over the years, but when you look back at the players you admired coming up, are there any drummers that used rudiments and those techniques that you'd like to tell us about?

All the guys that I admired, I just loved their feel and the way that they played. Not a lot of

Continued on p58

GADD'S GEAR...

Steve's trusty tech, Yard Gavrilovic, on the setup and sound that has shaped a galaxy of hit records

"When his signature kit was being developed, Steve spent a lot of time with Yamaha's then chief designer, Takashi Hagiwara, aka Hagi, and they were able to achieve exactly what suited Steve and his ideals. Nothing in his setup has really changed in 30 years, so he is obviously more than happy with it, and his drums work for every occasion. Over the years I have always found that the world's best players know exactly what they want and why, and they stick with it. They dislike change for change's sake, which saves me a lot of time and grief constantly testing new things!

"When it comes to tuning Steve's drums, I simply follow his techniques. I can't give too much away, but so much of the sound actually comes from the player. I've tested this theory with other drummers at my shop and it's the way that Steve strikes the drums that makes that sound. Importantly, the drums are also tuned for pitch and stick response, and some higher pitch drums are also muted to lower the tone. When we are using the 10"x7½" tom, the pitch is close to that of the snare, which leads to sympathetic vibration between the two – so much patience is called for when it comes to tuning that one!

"The Yamaha Steve Gadd kit has birch toms for more attack and a maple bass drum for warmth. The internal bass drum muffling depends on the gig Steve is playing, and it varies from a pillow touching both heads, to a packing blanket slightly off the batter head.

"The snare is the most important drum in his setup. I rarely change the head, as the older and thinner it gets the more Steve likes it. We can go a whole tour without snare head changes, but I will sand the coating down on a new head so there is a spare ready to go. On stage, I sit behind and to the left of Steve and he'll call me up and say, 'Let's get the other one ready...' as he rubs his hand over the head. I watch his every move and it's second nature now to know what he's up to.

"We both live on the edge when that change of snare comes and the head splits in two! Fortunately, Steve is cool as a cucumber when it happens, as I have to be when swapping out. I replace the head immediately so as not to tempt fate twice in one night. In those situations so much of what I do is second nature and done by ear and feel – I just switch to autopilot.

"When it comes to his cymbals, again it's all about personal taste and choice. Steve has had his set for quite a few years now and picked them out at Zildjian. He brings them with him and I just bung them on the stands! Nothing beats the story years ago when his 'go everywhere' cymbal set never arrived in New York for a studio session after a mix up at the cargo warehouse. They ended up with the rest of his gear heading to Dallas. Texas in a shipping container for rehearsals. Jim McGathey at Zildjian's headquarters in Norwell saved my bacon on that occasion!

"I have been working with Steve for nearly 25 years now and I have so many highlights and wonderful memories – I bore my wife to tears with them! Steve and I love humour and we don't take ourselves seriously, but we do take our work seriously. Steve is a people person in that he cares about others and has great humility. The best players have no ego – it's all about making great music – and the other drummers that come to see Steve just adore him. It's hard not to! We have both been around the world many times and both of us embrace travel and other cultures, so we tick along together quite nicely!"

GEAR LIST

DRUMS: YAMAHA

Steve Gadd 30th Anniversary Custom kit
10"x7½" and 12"x8", or 12"x8" and 13"x9", 14"x12", 16"x14" birch toms with die-cast hoops
20"x16" maple bass drum with lifter
Yamaha Steve Gadd Signature steel shell snare drums with die-cast hoops

CYMBALS: ZILDJIAN

14" K Custom Session top hi-hat (the favourite '60s keyholed top hat was retired)
14" A Custom bottom hat with eight rivets
15" A Custom with eight rivets
18" K Dark Thin crash
20" Avedis Classic Orchestral ride
20" K Zildjian ride
16" China (used occasionally on Eric Clapton and Steve Winwood shows)

PLUS:

Yamaha Hardware, Remo heads (Ambassador Coated batter heads to toms batter and reso, Ambassador Coated Batter head to bass drum, Ambassador Yamaha 10" Ported resonant head to bass drum, Ambassador Coated batter head to snare, Diplomat Clear to snare side), Vic Firth Steve Gadd signature sticks and brushes, two custom made Vintage DrumYard stick table/music stands and Tama metronome

Image Richard Ecclestone/Redferns

Tributes to Gadd...

ERIC CLAPTON

The blues guitar legend on his first mystical meeting with 'the brother I never had'

Image Christie Goodwin/Redferns

"I had heard of Steve for a long, long time – our careers probably had been running parallel – but I wasn't familiar with his body of work until I heard some of the Paul Simon stuff and Steely Dan.

"I had a long experience of working with incredibly good drummers, but they had all moved in and out of my life – like Ginger [Baker] and Steve Ferrone, Jim Gordon and Jim Keltner to name a few. I think I had just done a blues album with Jim Keltner, but he wasn't able to go out on the road with it. I had intended to do a whole tour based on this record where it would really be quite a difficult job – not standard drumming at all, it needed a lot of research and a lot of sensitivity. Russ Titleman suggested Steve and I was in such a bind I jumped at it really, and thought maybe it was a good chance to test out whether we would work together, and we did.

"Meeting Steve for the first time, in some mystical way I felt like we were parts of the same fabric. We did that tour and it was an incredible success and that was it. I have had a very nomadic existence as a musician and I have never really been very keen on staying with one outfit for too long, so this is probably the longest relationship I have had with one musician – other than Nathan East, who has actually survived longer than anybody with me! – and it is that thing of having something so deeply in common that if I try other things I always end up going back. So Steve has been very, very instrumental in the way I make music.

"When we were doing the blues tour we had already made the album so I could play him that, but it really wasn't the same thing because that was Keltner's interpretation. So I would lend him records and kind of give him a crash course in what I had grown up with, because we did, in fact, come from incredibly different sides of the street.

"I was only really introduced to jazz as a working issue through Ginger and Jack [Bruce] and by then I was so firmly grounded in the blues, I thought it was the subtlest form of music. When Steve and I met – and I think it was the same in a way with Ginger and Jack – something happened between the two of us, but I don't know that I was really ever hoping to convert Steve, no more than I had been able to really convert Ginger or Jack. But without doubt I think he recognised what I saw in it. We came to a meeting point and Steve then started teaching me about jazz and was great at pointing me in the direction of the more subtle forms.

"One of the things that people talk about with Steve is that he is a musician. When we go into the studio, the first thing he'll want is to listen to the song – several times – before he goes anywhere near his instrument. He doesn't just immediately go to his drummer's role, he hears everything as a musician.

"Steve, I find, is so applied to what he is doing. He is a very passionate musician and I am facing the other way a lot of the time, so it's only when I turn around that I see how hard he is going at it. And he does everything with that same application. A lot of other musicians probably get alerted to the fact that they are going into a different genre and they have to be a certain way – there is a kind of should-ism about it – but Steve is just going to be himself. He applies the same criteria and his criteria is: 'What is this and how can I do what I do to enhance it?'

He really does concern himself with how he can make it better – not how it is going to make him look. That's the difference. I just know, almost like an assumption, that Steve is going to take it somewhere else – he's going to advance it and move it up a notch.

It's a funny thing but I can't picture in my head how Ginger played, or how Jim Gordon played – it's on such a subconscious level for me. I'm either comfortable with it and it works, or I'm not. I really would be hard pressed to define what it is about Steve, other than his humanity, that he brings to the drums. I don't have any technical idea of what I do, let alone what other musicians do. Most of the great ones will do what is necessary and what is the best thing, first time, and Steve is one of those. You will hear a record that he is on and you will hear the sound – with Steve it's his tone on everything and the volume he plays at. And yet if you take all the other stuff away, you'll hear this other stuff going on, the inner things that he puts into it, and that's magnificent.

"Right away I knew that we were going to be happy. He was punctual, ready to go, attentive, humble and just a great guy to sit down and be with. We began a friendship. Steve and I are exactly the same age and there are a few other areas where we have walked an identical path. He's almost like the brother I never had and is an incredibly warm human being and a funny man – a very, very good guy."

GADDIMENTS

THE FIRST DRUM BOOK FROM

STEVE GADD

Gaddiments features a series of rudimental passages inspired by Steve's time in drum corps and love of the rudiments.

Each exercise is based on a classic or contemporary rudiment, then displaced by starting on different subdivisions of the beat, creating new rhythms without changing the sticking. All of the solos are written in a way that reinforce the understanding and importance of phrasing.

Includes 36 themes/concepts and 85 individual exercises, each with an accompanying video demonstration.

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them actually played rudiments and a lot of them were totally unschooled, but I would just watch them in awe because of how they did what they did, and how they sounded without having had any kind of technical training.

At that stage I was open to everything – I just loved drums. From the rudimental stuff to groove, to the guys that could play jazz and really make it swing. Drummers like Tony [Williams] who had that free approach; he was almost undrumistic because he was doing stuff that nobody had ever done before!

So I don't think that I was ever looking for the rudiments that guys were playing, I was just looking to know how they did what they were doing – trying to emulate their playing and create their feel.

Eventually I became less afraid to change things up a little bit and make everything more comfortable for me as a drummer, and that's really how things evolved.

I guess I might have tried to copy what someone did that was totally unorthodox, and in order for me to that I might have ended up incorporating a rudiment without even knowing it, but the idea was never to incorporate a rudiment, the idea was to sound like that player I admired and to do it as comfortably as I could.

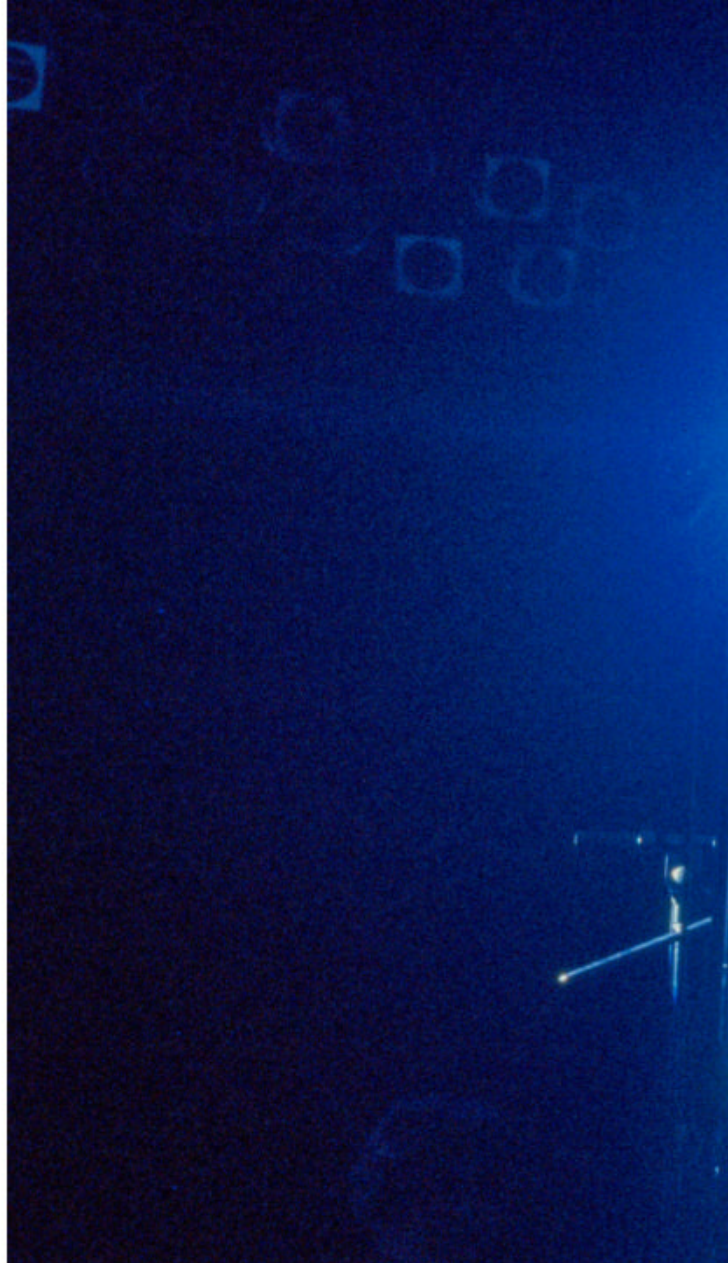
But it's important to remember that we can't do everything like other players... That other drummer does it in a way that feels good for them, but that way might not be comfortable for me, or you. The fact that whatever they did sounded great, that's the thing that should challenge you to try and emulate that groove.

You are such a modest man, but it must be wonderful to know how highly regarded you are and how much love our community has for your playing and your musicality.

I respect and I appreciate everyone that has listened to me, and that's why I am excited about sharing the creative things that have happened in this book. I really hope that it will mean something to other people too and that it will inspire them in the same way that it has inspired me.

There are some really fantastic patterns in *Gaddiments* and the displacement idea – how it develops through the book with that anticipation and switching it around – is just great

Well it gives you new and different rhythms, because up until now I had never thought of displacing this stuff, you know? But the more you do with different stickings, the more natural it starts to feel and – even though these are the same rudiments that I have been playing my whole life – they feel new. The fact that they are taking on a new meaning is great and the joy for me now is sharing them. I never had a plan, but the displacement idea really does seem to have become a motif for the book.



Tributes to Gadd...

CHICK COREA

The late virtuosic jazz keyboardist on his musical partnership with Gadd

Image Timothy Norris/Getty Images

"The first time I met Steve was when we were both playing with Chuck Mangione at a club in Rochester. Gee, he was playing great, but he was playing kind of an old style. I thought, 'I wonder if has ever heard Tony Williams play?' So we got together on the weekend and it was amazing what Steve did, because we listened to some records together – what Tony was doing – and I played him some of the Miles [Davis] record that I had taken this stuff from. Then we had a couple of days off and Steve came back with a completely new kit and a completely new way of playing – his own version of what, I guess, he had listened to on Miles' record. It totally amazed me.

"My music-making with Steve through the years has shown that he is an incredibly thoughtful and imaginative musician. I never wrote drum parts. I'd give Steve the piano score, but before we'd dive in to start to actually make sounds, he'd come over by the piano, we'd talk about it a little bit and I'd just play the piece for him. And I could see him sorting out and imagining what he might do, and running through it without touching the drums at all. So by the time he got on the drums he had a full concept of what he wanted to do – it was a very thoughtful way to approach it.

"Steve and I share a heart, I think, about how to make music, which is why I love to work with him. It's not about a particular style, it's about how to make that piece of music happen with our instruments. He is a creator of the moment – he hears what the music is then he composes his part and then he realises it on the drums. Of course, the thing other drummers – and other musicians – are amazed about Steve is the perfection of his technique. It's a pretty magnificent technique! We both share a love of military and drum corps drumming too, and how he works rudimental drumming on the snare drum is just wonderful. But that's just the technical part of it. The real guts of the matter is the fact that he is able

Image Luciano Viti/Getty Images

Well *Gaddiments* is in my library now and I suppose the inevitable question is, are you going to take this further with a second volume?

The more I play the rudiments, the more I get into them, and the more different things start evolving. So, if I have the time, there are certain ideas that I'd like to explore. It's all a journey and when I was a kid I loved that process of writing a drum part, sharing it with the guys in the corps and then us all playing it together. The patterns in the book can be played with other people too, and you can use the phrases as stepping-stones. You open one door and it leads to another, and it's so nice to be able to invite people in.

On behalf of drummers everywhere, I'd just like to finish up by saying thank you for all the inspiration and incredible music that you've provided for us. We still all get so inspired by your playing and having the chance to tell you that means so much to me personally.

Well, I want to thank you too, because it works both ways. We can learn so much from watching what other drummers are doing. All I did was try and play something that I heard somebody else do. Emulating people and sharing ideas is how we learn and grow, and you all inspire me too.

Gaddiments is available to order now from hudsonmusic.com

to take a piece of music and actually compose something for it that makes total sense – that actually brings the music to a completeness. Steve is the master at creating the correct and beautiful drum part for each piece.

"My compositions spanned all kinds of ranges of rhythm, but some of the ways the arrangements are, and some of the ways the melody is, it's jazz and it's loose and some of it has a complicatedness about it. But underlying all of that is a rhythm that grooves. As a drummer you have to find where that is. If you listen, for instance, to the way Steve plays on *The Leprechaun* that we did together, the melodies are kind of flowing over the top, but through it all Steve finds that point – the pocket. Steve knows where that is and even when we are playing some wild stuff, you can always feel that. It's one of the things I love about him.

"Steve is also one of the first drummers I have ever heard who was able to thoughtfully take a drum part and make it into a memorable tune or sound – something you remember. He composed a part and it became a basis to what underlined the tune, and of course then he would improvise and add other things. But I had never heard that done before and I think that approach influenced a lot of drummers. We made *The Leprechaun* in 1975 and the drum parts that he created on 'Lenore', 'Nite Sprite' – on all of the tunes – are memorable.

"It was our first recording together and for the final tune, 'The Leprechaun's Dream', I put a big orchestra together. It was quite something. Steve had a copy of the piano part hung up in front of him on boom stands and he was reading it across. It's a live take and Steve is playing like that live without anything and it's just some of the greatest, most creative drumming I have ever heard.

"Steve is one of the musical partners that I have that, without any discussion, we work together completely telepathically. There is a communication that goes in when we play and the music begins, and we both take care to be aware of every offering that the other is giving. Every note that Steve is playing, I can hear it and participate with it, and do something with it. And I have a feeling that is what he is doing with my playing, too. So there is this complete communication that occurs, which creates a very strong musical bond and it's the thing that all performing musicians strive for when they play. When I'm playing with Steve I feel like I am playing his drums with him and I get the feeling like he is on the piano. It's a complete joy.

"Steve has a drum sound – it's his choice of equipment and his choice of tuning and however it is that he puts his kit together. It's not like it's such a different kit, but it's the way that he hits and plays it, of course, and it's the kind of drum sound that works in all kinds of music – from the lightest sounds of playing something delicate, to the sound of something that's really got a big, big beat to it. It's a very recognisable sound.

"Steve brings a warmth and humanity into his playing that I think brings it above normal. When he is playing the drums he presents himself, he doesn't just present licks and phrases and ideas. You can feel *him* and there is a beauty about that because he is an incredibly warm individual. He has a lot of compassion for people, he loves life and he loves music. And all of that shows when he is playing, which I think is very, very special and the hallmark of a great communicator."

JOSH

DEVINE

When *Rhythm* speaks to Josh Devine, it is from each side of the Atlantic. One of us is sat at our kitchen table for the Zoom call, the other is perched behind a drum kit beside an inviting pool at their LA home. In case you were wondering, it wasn't us in the idyllic, poolside kit location

Words **Rich Chamberlain** | Images **Nikki Mata**

Josh Devine has certainly come a long way over the last decade, from a Brighton teenager dreaming of a career behind the kit to packing out stadiums around the globe with pop juggernaut One Direction. Now, Josh lives out in LA with his wife, playing sessions and teaching remotely from that aforementioned swimming pool/drum room. In fact, he tells us that a few weeks earlier his lesson with F1 driver Lando Norris was streamed to millions of people via social media.

However, remote lessons followed by a dip in the pool are far from all that Josh has on his plate at the moment. His main attention right now is on LEVARA, the infectious tune-spewing trio that has been bubbling under the surface since 2018. Josh, Trevor Lukather (guitar) and Jules Galli (vocals) have spent the last few years honing their craft, writing and recording, and playing shows on either side of the Atlantic, including some mega gigs supporting Toto.

Now they finally have their debut, self-titled album ready to drop after its emergence was delayed, like so many things, due to Covid. "It was due to come out last year," Josh explains. "The pandemic stopped everybody in their tracks. Now that we are hopefully coming out of the tail end, we have released a couple of singles and can't wait to get onto the road."

Rhythm called Josh to find out how this eclectic, multinational band came to be, how he achieved the album's stonking drum sound and just how he looks back on his former life as a part of the One Direction machine. ▷

A British drummer, an American guitarist and a frontman from France – it's all very international, isn't it?!
I've lived in LA for five years and through the scene met Trev. We hit it off and became friends. Jules has been over here for years as well. He was one of those guys who you could go to any jam night in Hollywood and he would rock up on stage in his fedora and by the end of it everyone would be screaming how incredible he is.

We got together and wrote a track, and that turned into, 'Let's play some parties', [then] 'Let's write some more', and it became apparent that we had to focus our efforts on this.

Did you record the new album in LA?
We recorded in East Hollywood with our producer, Ethan Kaufmann, in his studio. We tracked there for about five weeks last January before the pandemic hit. The day LA went into lockdown was the day we finished our mixing tweaks.

Did you work closely with Ethan on the big rock kit sound on the album?
I love trying to find the biggest drum sound you can get without sampling. My kit is quite big so people think there will be a lot of bleed and we'll have to sample [but] the sound of the room we were in with these mono mics made this huge drum sound, so we didn't need to do lots of replacing. It was a natural sound.

You can hear the tone of the room, that is a big thing. I mix drums a lot when I record with other people and you realise if you have a great sounding room you can make anything sound great. Ethan was really hot on paying attention to detail.

You mentioned recording for other artists – what impact has that had on your playing and the tone you like?
Being able to play for different styles of music, in different scenarios, for different people, you learn something every time. There will be producers who know what they want and are almost mouthing the parts across the room to you – these incredible producers are always rubbing off on you.

But whether you're being told what to do or being allowed to let loose, you have to adapt to the room. You might hear in your headphones that you have this amazing snare sound, so then you want to change up what you're playing and, without overplaying, play some more snare.

That was the biggest thing, growing up, for me. When you grow up watching these amazing drummers who can chop for days, you can go into the studio thinking that every time there's a space you need to fill it, but playing sessions for different artists has toned that down a lot.

You can't have those crazy drum moments on a session, but LEVARA is your band so was it difficult to stick to that 'play for the song' mantra?
Yeah. I would be thinking, though, about the most basic way to keep the groove, and the producer or guys in the band would be saying, 'Shred this, man! This is your time to shine!' Then you have to step out of that mindset.

Live, though, is a different mindset. Once you have the blueprint for the song, when you go out live you can step out a little bit, and when you're in front of even ten people and they get the vibe and the adrenaline rushes in, there is no, 'Keep it chill' for me – it's, 'Screw this, let's go crazy!'

Back in the day with One Direction, in my headphones I would hear CD-quality drums, so I would try to do these quick fills and ghost notes that I am technically loving, but then out front you can just hear a wall of sound – they can't hear my 8" splash! So instead of doing ghost notes I might just do a flam drum fill because that sounds epic in a stadium that is filled with 90,000 people.

With this band, we are going to have fun and I will pick and choose my times to go ballistic, but I will hold it down – that's what drummers do, we serve the song. We're there to keep it going and make people dance. I don't want to step on anyone's toes but if there is a chance to get my guns out I will be shooting my shots, for sure.

There's a nice balance on the record, you don't step on any toes but then there's some great work on the hats and verse grooves.
'Allow' has a tom groove where I take the snare wires off and it chugs along and is tonal through the toms. That was a fun groove to come up with. That's one of my favourites to play.

'On For The Night' is another that I love. I was playing it in 4/4 time and when it got to the chorus I wanted to freshen it up and not play the same groove throughout. My 'go-to' was to go half-time, but that can drag and this song has this bounce so I decided to go half-time and keep the kick going on four, and start splashing the hats. It was very Police-y. I was channelling Stewart Copeland big time with that song. Then at the end we have those gang vocals and I go all around the kit.

It is going to be brutal to play and sing that part live. I think I need to start practising! I can't wait to have fun with this though and that's what it should be – music is a joyous gift.

We've spoken about the big kit sound on the record. What kit were you using?
It was a Mapex Saturn V. I have that kit out in LA. It is standard-size shells and a couple of Black Panther snares ranging from 14"x5" to 14"x6½". The main snare I used was the Black Widow, that is a little workhorse. You can tune it down slightly and it sounds like a Black Beauty, you can squeeze it up big time and it sounds

GEAR LIST

DRUMS: MAPEX SATURN V

8"x7", 10"x8", 12"x9" and 13"x10" rack toms
14"x14" and 16"x16" floor toms
22"x18" bass drum
18"x16" gong drum
Mapex Black Panther snares – 14"x5" Black Widow and 12"x5½" Warbird

CYMBALS: PAISTE

17" Signature Medium crash, 18" Masters Dark crash, 19" 602 Modern Essentials crash, 20" Masters Dark crash/ride, 14" Sound Edge hi-hats, 12" PSTX DJ hats, 22" Signature Powerslave ride, 8" Signature splash, 10" Dark Energy splash, 12"/10" PSTX splash stack, 14" PSTX Swiss Flanger stack and 20" 2002 Novo China

PLUS:

Gibraltar Custom Stealth rack and pedals, Vater Josh Devine signature sticks, Evans drumheads (EMAD Clear on bass drum, Black Hydraulics on toms and Onyx coated and G2 on the snare), Roland V-Drum Acoustic Design, Roland SPD-SX, Ultimate Ears UE 11 Pro in-ear monitoring and Porter & Davies throne with sub

Image Cal Aurand

Josh Devine

THE TRACK THAT...

I wish I had played on

'Shout' – Tears For Fears

Oh! There are a s**t-tonne of songs I wish I had played on. There's a Toto song called 'Dave's Gone Skiing' with Simon Phillips on drums. It is this long, instrumental song. Simon Phillips just rips on this song in all of these strange time signatures. I wish I had played on that, I just wouldn't have done it anywhere nearly as good as he did.

That is a song that more people should know, but actually I would have butchered that song, so instead I'll say 'Shout' by Tears For Fears. I know that is probably a drum machine but man, that is one of my favourite songs ever. It gets me so hyped.

First made me want to play the drums

'Till Then' - Seven

It would be one of my dad's songs. He was in this band called Seven. One of my earliest memories is putting the headphones on and playing 'Till Then', one of the songs on one of their singles. I listened to it and knew this was my dad's job, and I wanted to do it as well. I would have been about three years old and had just got my first drum kit.

Has an awesome drum sound

'Deadman' – Karnivool

This is an incredible band. 'Dead Man' has one of the best drum sounds I've ever heard. You can get the multitrack stems online. I heard the sound of that and thought it was just something else. It is mind-blowing. It is real drums as well, not overly perfect-sounding samples.

Gets me on the dance floor

'Blurry' – Puddle of Mudd

I hate dancing with a passion – I look like I'm being shot at when I dance – but a song gets me hyped if it has a cool groove. Or something like 'Blurry' by Puddle of Mudd. If that comes on I just want to rage. Or that Savage Garden song, 'To the Moon and Back', that is '90s pop perfection and takes me back to my childhood. I'm a sucker for '80s and '90s music. You won't often catch me dancing, though. My wife is a professional dancer so I wouldn't attempt it!

Defines me as a drummer

'Only You' - Wheatus

A hard question! I don't think any track I have recorded shows all of me. That being said, I did a song with Wheatus called 'Only You'. On that I was able to just let loose. That pretty much defines me right there. Either that or one of the new LEVARA tracks. There is a song called 'Ordinary' on our record and that is one where I get to do some cool drum stuff.

Image: Cal Aurand

Image: Nikki Mata

like a gospel pop snare.

I changed my ride out a couple of times. I used a 22" Paiste Powerslave – I used that on tour with One Direction because it was the only thing that would cut through all of the screaming! In the studio I used a 22" Dry ride as well – for the stuff that didn't need that crazy, heavy bell sound.

I've got six toms on the kit, from 8" to 16". I have a lot of options so I didn't need to swap any of that out. I have a gong drum as well but I haven't used that for years. Trust me though, when we can afford to take a big kit on tour I'll have the six toms, double kick, two gongs and a massive Paiste gong behind me – the full works.

The album will be an introduction to LEVARA for some people, but you've already had major European and US tours. What has the reaction been like?

Well, opening for a band like Toto, the crowd are looking at you and thinking, 'Impress me'. Toto have some of the world's best musicians and we're opening for them. The crowd are gearheads and huge lovers of music, so you know if you make a mistake people will be locked on to you. But it was amazing. People loved the songs. You go on and they are stood there, and by the end they are singing and clapping along. It was epic. The biggest show was to 13,000 people. I'm used to playing big shows, but not with my own music that we have poured our hearts and souls into.

How do you look back on your time with One Direction? That would have been a huge gig for a seasoned session player, let alone for a young guy as you were.

It was a whirlwind. It feels like it wasn't me. I feel like I've watched a movie of it. Then I'll think, 'Damn, I was part of that!' It's mind-blowing. There may not be another band that big in my lifetime. I was extremely fortunate to be able to do it.

If I could go back in time and do it again I would, and I would take a GoPro with me and record every moment. We did so many incredible things that I want to one day tell my grandkids.

A lot of people didn't quite get it. When I'd do an Instagram thing on one of my sponsors' pages, people would be like, 'Unfollow for the day, screw One Direction'. People didn't realise how we worked. We had people watch the show who said they hated One Direction but live, we crushed.

Pop music might not be your cup of tea but if you saw us live it was a rock show with fire on stage and everything was 100 times louder. I got to do things I never dreamed I would be able to do. I challenge anyone who wants to diss me for playing with One Direction, I challenge them to be given that opportunity and not do it. If anyone says they wouldn't do it, they are full of s**t!

Guys can be in bands for 30 years and not play some of those stadiums that you played...

It was weird, man. Very few session musicians get to do the kind of level of thing that we did. That is mind-blowing. It got to a point where we would be on our ninth stadium in a row and you'd ask, 'How many people will be there? 70,000? Hmm, not as many as last night, this is a smaller show'. That is insane!

I was 19 years old. I went to Vegas for the first time and having to go to these nights with no alcohol or gambling. The One Direction dudes were even younger and they were global superstars. They were 16! At that age I was still pulling faces and making strange noises out of the car window at people as we drove past.

Was it important to you not to get pigeon-holed as a pop guy after the One Direction gig?

The last thing you want to do as a session player is get pigeon-holed. You don't want people to think they can only call you for a certain type of gig. Obviously no one is going to call me for a Latin funk band, but pop music isn't my thing. Before One Direction, pop wasn't on my radar. I grew up as a kid, like, 'I don't want to be in a pop band, I want to be in a rock band'. It just so happened that I loved playing pop.

Before One Direction, I played with a UK rapper called Skepta. That taught me playing with a click and that whole world. When people see me live they say, 'Man, I can see you love gospel guys like Aaron Spears, but you play like a metal head – you hit like you're in Sepultura!' I have this weird mix of artists that I love and I sponge off everyone.

I wanted to make sure with LEVARA that we had that pop sensibility of catchy songs and hooks but at the same time still be authentic to who we are. It's not just rock or pop, it weaves between lots of genres.

LEVARA from LEVARA is out now on Mascot Records

GREYSON NEKRUTMAN

The 18-year-old online drumming phenomenon talks to *Rhythm* about creating a buzz from his basement, the importance of practicing the fundamentals and his mission to inspire people to chase their dreams

Words **David West** | Images **Chad Jenkins**

When Greyson Nekrutman was ten years old, his mother decided it would be fun to put videos of him playing the drums on Instagram. From these humble beginnings Nekrutman has built a global profile, attracting endorsements from Pearl, Meinl, Vic Firth and Remo as his follower count shot through the roof during the lockdown.

"That February, I probably had 30,000 subscribers," he says looking back to the beginning of 2020. "It started growing and growing, and then, this past December, I hit 100,000. I thought, 'Here we go, this is going to be an adventure'."

Nekrutman's Instagram channel now attracts some 205,000 subscribers who tune in to see his performances of classic drum solos and grooves. While he has tackled music by Incubus and The Police, much of the buzz has been around the fact that he is a teenager who celebrates the big band catalogue, drawing inspiration from stars of the swing era, like Buddy Rich and Sonny Payne.

Becoming Insta-famous has been an adjustment for the Long Island teenager, just out of high school. "It's a weird thing," he says. "Going into the city the other day, I walked out of the subway station and there were these two kids and one says, 'Hey, you're Greyson, right?' I'll admit it was a little freaky."

GEAR LIST

DRUMS: PEARL MASTERS

Maple Gum in White Marine Pearl
20"x14" bass drum
10"x7" tom
12"x8" tom
14"x14" floor tom
16"x16" floor tom
14"x5" Hybrid Exotic Kapur/Fibreglass snare drum
14"x5" Sensitone Brass snare drum

CYMBALS: MEINL

22" Byzance Vintage Pure Light ride
22" Byzance Jazz Monophonic ride
14" Byzance Jazz Thin hi-hats
14" Byzance Traditional Thin hi-hats
20" Byzance Jazz Medium Thin crash
22" Byzance Jazz Tradition Flat ride

PLUS:

Pearl Hardware, Redline Eliminator pedal and hi-hat stand, Vic Firth Signature sticks, Remo heads

Have you always been into swing and big band music?

I started playing a little bit of everything. I had a teacher named Justin Gallo, who gave me a foundation of playing most every style and genre, reading music, playing by ear. I was playing Dave Matthews Band, Sting, rock, a little bit of everything.

At ten or eleven, my brother, who plays saxophone, was coaxing me into playing jazz. I learned pretty quickly that you really can't 'sit in' on a rock gig, per se. With jazz there's a history of these jam sessions and gigs – you're playing standards. I realised, 'If I want to gig where I am in New York, there's a lot of jazz gigs, I'm going to have to get into this'.

Were there particular drummers who inspired you?

My first big influence was actually Carter Beauford from the Dave Matthews Band. I fell in love with his playing. Then Vinnie Colaiuta – I was into that '90s vibe for a while. I got into some of the jazz greats, like Philly Joe Jones, and then when it all turned was probably around when Covid happened. I'd heard this name, Sonny Payne, [but] didn't know anything about him. The only spectacle drummer I'd seen was Buddy Rich or Art Blakey – these people who play with so much power, finesse and speed and still make it so interesting. I must have come across Sonny Payne's name on a drum forum, talking about one of his solos or something. I looked him up and watched a video of him playing with the Harry James band, and I said, 'This is the guy I want to play like'.

That was probably a year ago. You go through these phases of people you want to play like and you meld them altogether, so I've got Ginger Baker, Mitch Mitchell, Sonny Payne, Buddy Rich, Art Blakey, Carter Beauford, Vinnie. You keep a little bit of everything from each person.

Do you want to go in the direction of being a big band player?

At this moment I'm doing a lot of remote recording here at my house and I'm doing

all different styles. At this point in my career, I'm so young, I'm starting so fresh into this. If there is a gig, I'm going to take it because I want to play as many styles as I can. I want to experience as much as I can. If there is a studio gig, hey, I'll take it. If there's a rock tour, let's go, I'm ready.

That's another reason why I try to post all different styles. It's amazing that I've been known for bringing back big band, but it has to be balanced out with, 'I want to work, I want to go out there and experience things, I want to play'. So, I'm going to show as many styles as I can and just see where it goes.

Would you like to lead your own projects in the future?

At one point, for sure. I think there is a space to fill for that figurehead drummer, that really exciting drummer who inspires more than just people holding sticks, hitting cymbals and drums. People saw Sonny and talked about his happiness and excitement behind that drum set with the [Count] Basie band. It made them go do something with passion and inspiration and excitement. It's far beyond music.

It's the same reason there are people who make YouTube videos on health and fitness – they want people to feel better, they want them to prosper, to reach their dreams. People ask me, 'Who's your favourite drummer nowadays?' But there's not very many who I think are doing that in the public spotlight.

I think it would be a little quick if I started my own project now because I am very young, the following is not too large, but at one point, of course. I think it would be something really fresh and new and not old big band stuff. Maybe a smaller group, a sized-down big band that was really exciting and maybe fused new music into it. That excitement, that's the key.

How do you translate what you work on in the practice room into a live setting?

It comes down to a couple of things. I always lean on the side of caution. I'd rather

"I WANT TO WORK, I WANT TO GO OUT THERE AND EXPERIENCE THINGS, I WANT TO PLAY. SO, I'M GOING TO SHOW AS MANY STYLES AS I CAN"

SOLOING AS A CREATIVE PRACTICE

One consistent ingredient in Greyson's practice routine is setting time aside for soloing, which he credits to Ginger Baker.

"Every day, I sit down and I just solo," he tells *Rhythm*. "I start playing and it could be five minutes, two hours. Eventually in that solo you'll think of an idea, but you can't execute it. Okay, pause the solo. Whatever that little lick was, practice that, play it over and over again.

"I think of it as if I'm building a house and that's just another brick. Every time I watch a video of a drummer and I say, 'Holy crap, that's amazing, I want to learn that', and I go and learn that fill or solo, that's another brick added."

Aside from soloing, there's always time in Greyson's practice routine for the fundamentals. "I've never been into learning extreme linear fills or practicing these really advanced polyrhythms," he says. "That's all great, but at a certain point it becomes rainy day work or busy work. I ask myself, 'When am I ever going to use this exact exercise on a gig?'

"I'd rather practice a single stroke roll and get it extremely clean than practice a linear fill that's going to take me two hours, that I'll use once, or a comping exercise from a book that takes me four hours and I'll use it twice. I'd rather get a paradiddle down over the drum set, backwards, forwards, fast, slow, smooth, in my sleep, every surface, every tempo. It's very basic."

▷ play a more basic fill than drop my stick and mess everything up. I'll build it up. At the beginning of the gig, I'm not going to play too risky.

I'll give you an example. I just did a video shoot for a couple of different people – I went on a little Greyson tour – and one of them was at Meinl cymbals in Nashville. We went to a beautiful studio and I was doing some playalongs to songs that were written for me, that I'd practiced, and then I'd planned to do a drum solo.

One of the biggest tips is don't get married to your set-up. Set your throne height to what's comfortable so you don't hurt your back or your legs, make sure you can hit the snare drum, floor tom, rack tom, but don't obsess over it.

I got to this Meinl shoot, we set up the drums and they were different sizes than I'm used to, different stands, different cymbals than I'm used to. That didn't bother me because I was used to not being used to my set-up. They said, 'What do you want to do first?' I said, 'The solo'. A lot of people would say, 'Don't you want to warm up?' No. Because I knew if I played my solo first I wouldn't be worn out.

Of course, you should be prepared and know the music. Sometimes you're sitting in, you're reading, but I think it's just having confidence, knowing you have a ton of things you can rely on, a ton of vocab, and being confident.

Say you sit in on a gig and you don't want to play too loud, you're scared. That's one of the biggest mistakes you can make. People are going to say, 'I've only been playing a couple of years, I don't feel too confident'. Fake it 'til you make it is the truth. If you show up, do the job to the best of your ability. It's a lot better to go in there and play like you really mean it and play a very basic fill and very basic solo than go in there, be very timid and try to think about what crazy lick you're going to pull out in four bars. Oop, four bars went by already.

You did some filming for Pearl, showcasing their new 75th anniversary President kits?

Yes, that was on their brand-new President Series kit. All the videos are going to be on that. That kit's amazing. I have the blue President Series kit here at my house, but on the Meinl videos I played on the Phenolic kit.

How did you originally connect with all of your endorsers?

It was all through Instagram. They came to me. It was all natural growth and the first people that believed in me were Meinl.

Has that been very helpful?

Absolutely. I would never have been able to make the videos we just filmed without them. When you see these, it's ridiculous,

the quality, the way these videos came out and the trip itself, it was amazing. I think the support is one of the biggest things – knowing I could call them up at any time.

What about your home filming set-up? How has that developed?
I don't use anything fancy at home and that's why these new videos are such a shock to people because for once it's more than one angle. I use my iPhone as a camera, I use an overhead and a bass drum mic I got when I was eight years old from a really cheap Guitar Center mic pack. I have a nice interface I got for my birthday one year and I use Logic, but I don't use anything fancy.

So when that Memphis Drum Shop video came out the other day, people were like, 'Whoa, what is this? It's more than one angle!' I think the biggest learning curve was Logic, but I had some friends help me, so it's been easy really.

What have been the highlights of your drumming life so far?
I would probably say this last trip. I went to Sweetwater, I went to Pearl drums – and Pearl drums were the first drums I ever played, they were my first drum set. To go back to where I started, in a way, was a big deal. When I went to Memphis Drum Shop, it was almost like a feeling of, 'Wow, we did it'. We worked so hard to get to the point where I'm able to do these things – I'm able to meet the people that got me this gear to play. I got to see how drums are made, it was just incredible. Sweetwater, that place is ridiculous. It is so nice, the people are the best.

"IF YOU SHOW UP, DO THE JOB TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY. IT'S A LOT BETTER TO GO IN THERE AND PLAY LIKE YOU REALLY MEAN IT"

Did you know in advance what you were going to do for all the video shoots?
With Meinl, we'd been planning this for over a year. The tunes had been written close to a year ago. I knew what I was doing, I just had to practice them a little bit. Last-minute, I added a drum solo, so I just said, 'I'm going to do this on the spot'.

Memphis Drum Shop, I knew I was going there about two months in advance but we didn't know what I was going to do. Then Sweetwater, it was completely spontaneous. We'd planned the trip for about a month then when we went there, the first day we had a meeting about what we were going to do and the second day we did it.

But it went so smooth because of the people there. Biggest shout out to Chris Hershman, he's the film production director. He was the easiest to work with, he made it seamless. I was so nervous because I've never been good at plotlines of teaching, 'What do I say now, how am I going to end it?' He just walked me through it like it was nothing. I don't even know what happened, it was that quick.

If your wildest dreams come true, where do you want to be in five years' time?
I would say touring the world, playing music I love, which could be a million different things. I'm not saying one style or whatever, just really bringing that excitement back to a public spot.

It's about more than just being a good drummer. It's being a spectacle, being somebody who is interesting and who people want to strive to be like. I think that's missing. I think we're bringing it back though. I know we are.

Gear!

The latest kits and the new gear drummers need, tried and tested by our team of experts

SJC Jay Weinberg Signature Snare p75

Kustom KDA50 Drum Amplifier p74

Welcome back to another fantastic selection of gear reviews. In this issue we'll kick off by taking a look at a couple of cymbal sets – one from a brand that will need no introduction and the other from a new kid on the block.

The Zildjian K Sweet Cymbal Pack offers the musicality and versatility of the Sweet range in an all-in-one pack, including hats, ride and two crashes. Leon Cymbals produces handmade Turkish cymbals and has been launched by the master cymbal-smith for Impression Cymbals, Guclu 'Leon' Arslan. Check out the review to hear what our own cymbal guru, Mark Whitlam, made of them.

Matt Fisher then checks out SJC's beastly Jay Weinberg signature snare, and Geoff Nicholls casts his expert eye (and ears) over a duo of new stave snares from Bristol Drum Co. – a 14"x5½" Wenge/Purpleheart and 13"x7" Ash/Wenge/Iroko.

Finally, we assess the KDA50 Drum Amplifier from Kustom, a small 50-watt e-drum speaker with multiple inputs, EQ controls and a 10" speaker cone.

Tom Bradley

Rhythm Gear Editor

Meet Rhythm's Reviewers

Rhythm has been reviewing the gear drummers need for decades. Our team of expert reviewers have sat behind countless kits on stage and in the studio, so you can rely on them to bring you the right verdict. In this issue, we also find out which live act they would love to have seen but didn't...

TOM BRADLEY

With an unquenchable thirst for new drum gear, Tom is perfectly placed to be *Rhythm*'s reviews editor. He's not only a longstanding member of our review team but also a lecturer at BIMM and a busy performing drummer. You may recognise Tom as the man behind the kit in many of the online gear videos on our YouTube channel.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?

"I've been lucky enough to see pretty much every band on my shortlist, but the big one that was before my time would have to be Led Zeppelin. I can only imagine..."

MARK WHITLAM

Mark is a freelance musician who has played for varied artists, from Mercury Prize-nominee Eliza Carthy through to jazz and funk legend Pee Wee Ellis. He is currently one-quarter of ECM recording artist Iain Ballamy's new band, featuring pianist Jason Rebello. Mark is a senior lecturer at BIMM Institute Bristol, where he has taught for the last ten years.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?

"Queen - the original line-up - at Wembley, 1986."

Rhythm verdict

The **RHYTHM RECOMMENDED** award is given to those products that perform strongly in their category. While not quite scoring top marks they are noteworthy products in their field.

The **RHYTHM STAR BUY** is awarded to those products that are truly outstanding in their design, construction, function and value.

MATT FISHER

Matt has performed with some of the UK's most prominent musicians, such as Tina May, Jacqui Dankworth, Najma Akhtar and Steve Waterman. He has toured the world working in a variety of styles, from jazz to world music. Matt teaches at Chichester University and is also an examiner for Trinity College London.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?
"It would have to be Queen!"

GEOFF NICHOLLS

A regular contributor to *Rhythm* for over 20 years, Geoff is a musician, author, journalist, and lecturer. In the '70s he signed to Decca, EMI and Phonogram in various bands. He was then presenter of BBC's award-winning *Rockschool* in 1984 and 1987. His books include *The Drum Book: A History Of The Rock Drum Kit* and *The Drum Handbook*.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?
"The Beatles – obviously – beyond all else, a thousand times! Then in my realistic time-frame, Led Zeppelin. Had the opportunity and missed it!"

Kustom KDA50 Drum Amplifier

Does this new offering from Kustom provide ample competition against the established brands? We pump up the volume to find out

Words **Mark Whitlam**

PRICE £209

This compact amp from Kustom takes up a relatively small footprint at about 40cm². Weighing in at just over 14kg, the sturdy carpeted chassis demonstrates build quality rivalling more established brand names. The plastic controls feel less substantial to touch, but there is a satisfying resistance to the two input volume knobs and the three EQ controls.

There are two mono-summed inputs for your electric kit (these could be different sources, in fact) and an Aux input that also takes a ¼" jack and has a discrete volume control. Add to that a fixed level 3.5mm mini-jack input for, say, your phone playing songs, and you have up to four inputs, which can all be monitored silently if you plug your headphones into the mini-jack on the front panel.

The 50W output throws out an impressive level when cranked to the max, courtesy of the 10" woofer cone and offset 2½" piezo tweeter. This was sufficient to match the sound of an acoustic kit played at a moderately loud level. If you were to use this as the only source of amplifying your electronic drums it would hold its own in a typical band setting – that is, unless you are auditioning for Status Quo with their wall of Marshall stacks.

The high-frequency EQ control was by far the most responsive in terms of degree of control. We found the amp to be fairly prominent in the middle frequencies, so a slight cut here gives a more neutral starting point. Boosting the lower frequencies with acoustic and 808-style bass drums rendered little change, which is not wholly surprising from a 10" cone. When the samples were rich in bass, even before we tried boosting the low EQ, there was some audible vibration from the device.

What is likely to be a deal-breaker for more discerning players is the relatively high noise-floor (or self-noise) that is the background 'hiss' inherent in all electronic devices. This is surprisingly apparent, even with no external device plugged in and with the volume controls set at zero.

1. Woof and tweet
The 50W amp deals out plenty of volume via the 10" woofer and separate tweeter.

2. Multiple inputs
Two inputs for e-kits, a separate Aux in channel and a mini-jack input for your phone, tablet or laptop.

3. Solid as a rock
The external build quality is impressive, with a carpeted finish, rugged grille and recessed carry handle behind the control panel.

4. Silent disco
The mini-jack headphone output mutes the speaker output for silent practice, while still allowing you to mix your inputs.

CONTACT
www.jhs.co.uk

Verdict

This sturdy, compact amp would make an effective practice or live amplifier for most e-drum kit users but lacks the sonic refinement to be a real competitor. With a loud enough volume to match an acoustic kit, and a responsive EQ control, the amp has potential, although it's let down somewhat by muddy low-frequencies and a high noise floor.

SJC

Jay Weinberg Signature Snare

SJC team up with the Slipknot drummer to craft his signature and truly unique snare drum

Words **Matt Fisher**

PRICE £1,799

Having recently been impressed with the SJC Pathfinder Series, reviewed in Issue 295, it comes as no surprise to us that the Californian drumsmith's latest offering and collaboration with Slipknot's Jay Weinberg delivers an impressive punch.

Unpacking the drum we are immediately struck by its truly individual appearance. The resin black-and-white art work, designed by Weinberg himself, gives a unique look against the matching flat-black hardware. The aesthetically-pleasing wooden badges adorning the 14"x6½" maple shell bear both the SJC logo and Wire and Nails 'W' motif. It becomes apparent just by looking at this drum that it takes no prisoners.

We begin by working it through all sorts of tuning ranges and it is immediately evident that the drum sits very comfortably in all extremities. Tuned low, the thick shell produces an amazing thud, whereas in the medium-to-high tuning range there is more dynamic attack.

However, for us, this drum really comes alive when cranked all the way up. Here the ghost notes sing out and the attack becomes blistering. As Weinberg says, "no drummer will have any challenge being heard with this drum in their arsenal, that's for sure!"

The shell has two 2" vents that give the drum more volume and sustain, plus an opportunity, perhaps, to put an additional mic here for a full blend of the snare sound.

Featuring an outrageous 48-ply shell, this is without doubt a beast of a snare, not only in weight but sound as well. If the dynamic possibilities of the drum alone aren't enough to lure you in, anyone who purchases this snare will also receive a virtual meet and greet with Mr. Weinberg himself.

1. Custom artwork finish
The black-and-white art work, designed by Weinberg, against the flat-black hardware gives this drum a unique look.

2 Wire and Nails
The aesthetically pleasing wooden badges around the shell bear both the SJC logo and Wire and Nails 'W' motif.

3. 45-degree bearing edge angle
The thick shell's physical weight, combined with precise, 45-degree bearing edges produce a blistering attack.

4: Venting anger
The shell has two 2" vents that provide the drum with more volume and sustain, plus an additional mic position.

Verdict

While designed perfectly for metal drummers, the flexibility of the drum means that you can use it in a surprisingly wide range of musical situations. The blend of subtle finesse and all-out assault is just one of many features that will separate this from other 'loud' snares on the market. This does however come at a price, but no doubt a perfect choice for anyone wanting to replicate the Weinberg sound.

CONTACT
www.sjcdrums.com

Rhythm STAR BUY

Zildjian
K Sweet Cymbal Pack

Zildjian releases its popular K Sweet Series in a versatile cymbal pack

Words **Tom Bradley**

PRICE £1,029

In 2018, Zildjian released the K Sweet line, which capitalised on the original popularity of the 23" A Sweet ride, introducing an entire set, only this time under the K Zildjian moniker. The full range includes 16", 17", 18", 19" and 20" crashes, 21" and 23" rides, and 15" and 16" hi-hats.

New for 2021 is a pre-selected configuration pack of these popular cymbals, the K Sweet Cymbal Pack, which comprises 17" and 19" crashes, a 21" ride and 15" hi-hats. Typical of any Zildjian K series, the Sweets have a traditional finish, meaning that their surfaces have not been buffed to a shiny (or 'brilliant') finish. This gives each cymbal a warmer character that is further enhanced by more complex and deeper lathing patterns in addition to extensive hand-hammering.

With the exception of the ride cymbal, the bells are left unlathed top and bottom, which Zildjian claims "helps to create nicely balanced high frequencies", adding some lighter notes into an otherwise dark and earthy tonality. In addition to tonal complexity, the bells give the cymbals an alternative appearance that adds to their overall attraction. The ride is completely lathed for a uniform finish, giving it a more piercing bell projection.

The overall profile of each cymbal is fairly low except for a raised bell, particularly on the ride. This flatness gives the ride more crash-ability and the crashes more ride-ability, resulting in an outstandingly

versatile family of cymbals. The Sweets are also thinner than regular Ks, which makes them darker once again. Narrowing further toward the edge makes them feel soft under stick and allows them a vast dynamic range.

Versatility is a word that gets thrown around a lot when we're discussing instruments. Not least because when we spend a wedge of our hard-earned cash on gear, be it a kit or a set of cymbals, we like to feel assured that it will be useable in a wide range of musical applications. This is where a cymbal setup like the Zildjian K Sweets really excels. It's no accident, for instance, that the over-sized 17" and 19" crashes provided, in comparison to the typical 16" and 18" usually found in cymbal packs, offer a perfect middle ground in terms of dimension,

playing into the edge. Once again, a fantastically versatile pair of cymbals that should be at home in more-or-less any application.

Overall, the K Sweet range is deeply musical and complex in tone, making it very applicable to jazz or acoustic styles of music but also with enough brightness and presence to work perfectly in rock, country, funk – you name it! They just sit in the mix perfectly, regardless of style. An absolute chameleon of the cymbal world.

At pretty much bang on a grand for the pack, buying as a ready-made set represents an ample saving over buying each plate individually. As one may expect, this family of cymbals is perfectly pitch matched and sounds instantly at home on our studio kit.

These cymbals bridge the gap between the classic K and more modern A ranges. They are highly musical, dynamic and above all, versatile instruments. Prepare to be converted.

"THE RIDE IS AN ABSOLUTE STUNNER AND PERSONIFIES THE VERSATILITY OF THE K SWEET RANGE. IT HAS A BRIGHT, CLEAR STICK DEFINITION SUPPORTED BY THE DARK AND WARM OVERTONES."

catering for the majority of musical tastes. As already mentioned, the larger sizes and flatter profiles also give them certain ride qualities, making the 19" in particular, a fantastic crash-ride.

The 17" crash is much faster and brighter in comparison to its big brother and lacks the same tonal complexities. The 19" mixes the light and dark elements beautifully while maintaining a clarity in its stick response. It opens up quickly due to the thin edge but possesses much more sustain than the 17". The un-lathed bells add an interesting texture, although perhaps unsurprisingly, neither can hold a torch to the dedicated 21" ride in this area.

The ride is an absolute stunner and personifies the versatility of the K Sweet range. It has a bright, clear stick definition supported by the dark and warm overtones. It crashes beautifully and has just the right amount of wash. The high-profile bell is crystal clear and light, yet also fits equally well into heavier tunes as it does Latin-style bell patterns.

The vast dynamic range and thinner profiles produce stunningly smooth and seamless swells, notable especially in the larger 19" crash and 21" ride.

The 15" hi-hats combine a thin top with an extra heavy bottom for a solid 'chick' sound. They are super crisp, fairly low pitched and have a rich open sound. The hats are soft under stick, particularly when

1. What's in the box?
The K Sweet pack comprises 17" and 19" crashes, 21" ride and 15" hi-hats.

2. A touch of tradition
The Sweets have a traditional finish, meaning that their surfaces have not been buffed to a shiny (or 'brilliant') finish.

3. For whom the bell tolls
With exception of the ride cymbal, the bells are left unlathed top and bottom, which Zildjian claims "helps to create nicely balanced high frequencies".

4. Keeping a low profile
The overall profile of each cymbal is fairly low except for a raised bell, particularly on the ride.

5. Versatility is key
The K Sweet range mixes complexity with projection for an incredibly versatile cymbal set.

6. Wallet-friendly
Buying as a ready-made set represents an ample saving over buying each plate individually.

CONTACT
www.zildjian.com

Verdict

The K Sweet Series possesses a fantastic balance of light and dark sonic capabilities. The Zildjian K stylings bring warmth and complex dark tones as a result of deep lathing and hand-hammering, while the unlathed bells add brightness to the overall tone. Combined with oversized diameters, this well-matched and affordable cymbal pack is versatile enough to take anything you throw at it.

The Bristol Drum Co.
Wenge/Purpleheart & Ash/Wenge/Iroko Snare Drums

Combining the best of British wood-working skills with international metal hardware, these two spanking, exotic snares hit the right spot

Words **Geoff Nicholls**

PRICES £560/£575

Mike Turner of Bristol Drum Co. has a practical and teaching background in design engineering and started to build drums around six years ago. We've featured his snares previously and been greatly impressed. As a craftsman builder, Mike can offer individually tailored instruments with shells built from scratch utilising a wide variety of woods.

Mike's favoured build is horizontal segments, although vertical staves are also incorporated in some deeper drums. Segmented construction results in an exceptionally strong shell. "The construction method gives the most stable and, more importantly, the most rigid shell," he asserts. I'm sure he's right; whenever I see a stave shell there is always that lurking thought that it could implode under duress and high tension.

Bristol's shells feature many combinations of domestic or more exotic hardwoods. A brief troll through the excellently clear website reveals, for example, Zebrano, Bubinga, black walnut, oak, padauk, cherry, teak and even black Valchromat (impregnated wood fibre).

Drums are made individually so the customer can suggest their preference. For review we have a 14"x5½" and a 13"x7". The 14" shell has three thicker bands of dark Wenge enclosing two thinner bands of Purpleheart. Each layer is built up from curved segments glued together to make a circle. The finish is traditional French polish, which brings out the Wenge's streaky grain and is slightly textured to the touch.

The 13" shell is more complex. It has two bands of warm, brown Iroko top and bottom with three thin rings of Wenge, again constructed from horizontal segments. In between, though, are two panels of light-coloured ash made from vertically laid staves.

Mike explains that for deeper shells it's easy to increase the vertical stave lengths, but a deeper segmented shell requires additional rings. Also, in this case the central bands of ash are cut vertically, making best use of the grain pattern.

This time the finish is a glass-smooth lacquer and the shells of both drums are flawless – the staggered joins so tight they're hard to discern. Painstaking inspection reveals the 14" drum has eight segments per layer, while the 13" has seven. Both drums have 45-degree bearing edges and subtly dipping snare beds. DW Mag throw-offs and 24-strand Puresound Custom Pro snare wires are appropriate fittings. The Bristol badge is made from hand-embossed wood and a gig bag comes gratis with every drum.

"TURNER USES VERY HARD, DENSE WOODS AND RIGID CONSTRUCTION, GUARANTEEING A RESONANT, BRIGHT, RESPONSIVE SHELL – ONE THAT IS SURPRISINGLY LOUD FOR A WOODEN SNARE".

Responsive in performance

The dizzying array of hard wood combinations is wonderful to look at, but the question for most drummers is how to choose? Few of us will ever be able to distinguish between the subtle timbral variations inherent in all these different tropical hardwoods. Yet they're all denser than the common staples of birch and maple, so Bristol's underlying logic is to use "very hard, dense woods and rigid construction, guaranteeing a resonant, bright, responsive shell – one that is surprisingly loud for a wooden snare".

Mike admits that the mixing of different woods is as much a design choice as anything else. In fact, his best-selling drum is the Harlequin (*Rhythm*, December 2018), which incorporates eight different woods. Incidentally, that is a great way of making sure no offcuts are wasted as the use of ever-endangered hardwoods is always fraught.

As regards the 14"x5½" drum, both Wenge and Purpleheart are described as 'tone woods', i.e, timbers that have intrinsic musical properties, sometimes used in guitar making. Gratifyingly, then, my first impression is that this drum is super lively. It's knife-sharp and sensitive over the entire head surface. The centre batter is sometimes a dead spot on lesser drums – on this it's anything but. Rim shots ring mightily and call for some edge damping, also making each stroke a little more taut.

Because of the 8mm-thick and extremely dense solid shell this drum will always have an inherent brightness. Dull it ain't. And even as it is tuned progressively lower, the hard woods ensure there remains an indomitable brilliance. Going right down to just above loose, the drum turns boingy, inevitably, but somehow remains thick and as chocolatey as its Wenge bands.

The Bristol Drum Co. Wenge/Purpleheart & Ash/Wenge/Iroko Snare Drums

Screwed right up, the centre hit is crisp and sweet-toned, cracking and snarey. However, the rim shots do start to get uncomfortably piercing. This seems due to the heavyweight 'S' hoops and a standard triple-flange hoop may prove more versatile, on the bottom at least.

The 13"x7" is less tubby than is often found with sub-14" drums. It's darker than the 14", exaggerated by the supplied Evans Genera Dry batter. Rim shots ring less and side sticking is more subdued. Those softer vertical panels of ash probably darken the sound a fraction, too. But still the drum is articulate with a buoyant, frisky tone, with that crunchy centre snare response again, which remains true at wide tunings. It doesn't go boxy, hollow or tom-tom-like, even when the snares are tensioned extra taut.

CONTACT
www.bristol-drum-co.uk

1. Save on sticks
Taking it easy on your rim shots, the flat-top steel S-Hoops are a classy option, although they do ring.

2. Simply the best
Both drums are fitted with DW's Mag (magnetic) throw-off and strainer with three-way adjustment and Puresound wires

3. Tropical hard woods
Bristol snares are made using a bewildering variety of hardwoods, producing some eye catching looks.

4. Bristol-badged
Adding a final touch of class, the Bristol Drums badge is a wooden oval with embossed lettering.

5. Sturdy segments
The 14"x5½" has five 8mm-thick bands made up of three thicker dark brown rings of Wenge with two narrower strips of Purpleheart in between.

6. Up and down
The smaller diameter 13" drum has horizontal segmented bands of dark Iroko and Wenge with central vertical staves of light-coloured ash.

Verdict

Bristol's Mike Turner continues to refine his craft, hand-building shells from eye-catching combinations of unusual tropical and domestic hardwoods. Superbly built and expertly finished, the favoured segmented construction is extra-stable and stress-free. Exceptionally hard timbers produce snares that are bright and loud, yet sensitive, responsive and big on tone. Adorned with the best fittings, these instruments fully justify their boutique price tags.

Leon Cymbals

Hammer, Flat Bell Lathed & Flat Bell Raw Rides

Unique, handmade delights from Turkey are the traditional work of a master cymbalsmith. Can Leon hit his mark with these?

Words **Mark Whitlam**

PRICES
22" Hammer ride, £379
22" Flat Bell Lathed ride, £379
23" Flat Bell Raw ride, £399

We have been served up with a trio platter of Turkish delights from Leon Cymbals. These are completely handmade using age-old methods, including melting the alloy with coal, firing with wood then hammered and lathed by individual cymbalsmiths.

Güçlü 'Leon' Arslan is the master cymbalsmith at the helm, with each cymbal clearly sporting his signature on the top surface. This selection has a classy, high-quality look and feel. If you check out their website and associated YouTube channel, you can hear good quality video demos of many of their different cymbal lines. You can actually request a bespoke cymbal design via an online form as part of their Custom Shop signature series.

By the hammer of Thor!

The 22" Hammer ride weighs in at 2,415g – all cymbals have their weights written on the underside of their bells – which equates to what could be deemed a medium/medium-thin cymbal in other manufacturers' terms. As the name suggests, there is extensive hammering across the top side in pretty consistent concentric circles, using just one size of hammer, leaving markings just smaller than a five-pence piece.

Unusually, the edge of the cymbal is also hammered, as you might find on some bottom wavy hi-hats, such as Paiste's 'Sound Edge' oeuvre, but this is somewhat more subtle, like a crimped Cornish pasty edging, if you will. Whereas the rationale for this approach on bottom hats is well known – to avoid air locks and thus help projection and brightness – we aren't totally sure of the sonic purpose for this finishing to the edge.

The top features both fine and more sporadic wider lathing marks, leaving some parts of the cymbal unfinished. This helps retains some of the darker and drier elements of the original cymbal, with the

Leon Cymbals Hammer, Flat Bell Lathed and Flat Bell Raw Rides

fully lathed bottom surface allowing it to open up with a majestic wash.

This is definitely the most versatile cymbal of the three we have been given to review, with a great balance of smoky stick attack and warm wash underneath. It is highly musical in this respect, allowing for excellent articulation of rhythmic patterns while creating a bed of complex sustain to support this. This is a no-brainer for jazz and big band styles, with it's old-school tone, but would also fit well into other genres, such as some rock, blues and Americana vibes, where oodles of volume is not required, but an earthy, organic tone is desired. In this respect, its soulful presence and controlled dynamic range could make it great addition for studio session work.

When a flat ride isn't a flat ride

The two other cymbals are designated as being 'flat bell' rides, however, they are a little more like the old Zildjian 'mini-cup' design, with the smallest of taper at around a three-inch diameter from the centre hole. As you would expect, particularly with these two cymbals being on the large side – 22" and 23" – there are many of the sonic qualities of a flat ride, but with rather astonishingly useful bells. Sure, you're not going to be clanging out on these for a metal track, but for Afro-Cuban bell patterns they are surprisingly useful, offering a fairly low-pitched tone and controlled volume.

1. Strong performer
The stick articulation-to-wash ratio of the Hammer ride is perfectly balanced for old-school, soulful tones.

2. Hammer, right
The many, fairly deep hammer marks along with the varied lathing approaches adds an organic complexity to the 22" Hammer ride.

3. Baby bell
The 22" Flat Bell has a small, slightly differently lathed bell, which works well for light volume, Latin-style phrases.

4. New signing
Master cymbalsmith Güçlü 'Leon' Arslan has over 15 years' experience and is now putting his signature to his own brand.

5. Ride the waves
The 23" Flat Bell Raw ride is surprisingly robust for a thin cymbal. Play it and watch the edges dance around.

6. Dry, dark and handsome
The unlathed 23" cymbal serves up an earthy tone with woody stick articulation. Possibly one for the jazzers and electronica fans.

22" Flat Bell Lathed

This is a visually and sonically beautiful cymbal. It's not a main ride for a pop gig, but as a second ride for acoustic-orientated songs, this could be a perfect fit. It's fairly thin for its size (2,145g) and so is a bit more mellow than some flat rides, which can have quite a defined 'ping' or 'tah' stick sound. This is more buttery but still gives a clear articulation.

There is a silvery, but not cold wash underneath, courtesy of its light weight. If you get a little too heavy-handed, the wash rapidly starts overtaking the stick definition and makes for a great crash too. As such, low-volume scenarios would favour this cymbal and it is totally suited to jazz settings, such as a piano trio format.

23" Flat Bell Raw

As one would expect, the absence of lathing top and bottom results in a dark, dry tone with plenty of woody stick definition. This is definitely one for the jazz connoisseur and is most niche in terms of application. That said, you can lay in pretty hard on this monster-size plate and never lose stick clarity under the subtle roar of complex, trashy and washy characteristics.

This really lends itself to more modern styles of jazz and potentially electronica or breakbeat styles from the retro tone. Crashing this beast delivers a fairly short-lived, trashy explosion, due to it's relatively light 2,485g weight.

"BEAUTY RADIATES FROM THE 22" FLAT BELL LATHED CYMBAL, BOTH VISUALLY AND SONICALLY. FOR MORE ACOUSTIC-ORIENTATED SONGS, THIS COULD BE A PERFECT FIT."

CONTACT
www.leoncymbals.com

Verdict

These are three very different cymbals that all share a vintage character to their sound. The Hammer ride is by far the most stylistically versatile and will suit a wider range of players. The (not-so) Flat Bell rides are more niche in their application. All can certainly hold their own with the established manufacturers in this field. We highly recommend exploring the other offerings Leon Cymbals have on their website videos.

Beats working

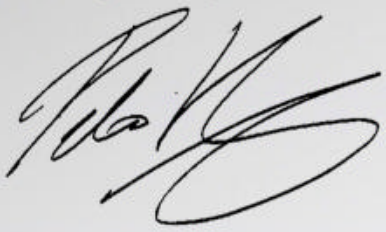
Every drummer needs *Rhythm*. Exclusive lessons from our expert team...

Welcome to Beats Working, the part of the magazine aimed at helping drummers of all abilities to develop and progress. Kicking things off in this issue is the familiar trio of Colin Woolway, Erik Stams and myself, and we're looking at ways of incorporating an often underutilised sound on the kit; the stepped hi-hat.

In *Getting Started*, *Creative Concepts* and *Technical Difficulties* you'll find a progressive approach to building this sound into your grooves to add a new dimension to your time playing.

Then in *Four-Piece Fills*, Jason Bowld presents some intense-sounding fills created from rudiment-based linear ideas, while in *Percussion Toolbox*, all-round percussion guru Pete Lockett introduces the African Udu and offers some essential techniques and patterns.

In *So You Want To Play Hybrid*, Tom Bradley discusses ways of changing programmed sounds mid-performance, and finally Mike Sturgis explores the concept of 'serving the music', focusing on Steve's Gadd unique ability to create the perfect performance. Enjoy!



Pete Riley,
Beats Working Editor

Introducing our expert tutors

PETE RILEY

In his 35 years of playing, Pete has recorded and toured with a wide range of artists from Guthrie Govan to Keith Emerson (ELP). He has been active in the world of education for many years, started writing for *Rhythm* in '93, and has been teaching at ACM for some 21 years as well as more recently at WaterBear in Brighton.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?
"I'd have to say Avenged Sevenfold with The Rev on drums."

JASON BOWLD

Jase has been the drummer for Welsh rock/metal titans Bullet For My Valentine since 2015. He began drumming aged 12 and turned professional at 21. He joined UK industrial legends Pitchshifter from 1999 to 2007, during which time his session drumming career took shape. He's played with Killing Joke, Pop Will Eat Itself, Fightstar and even Bill Bailey.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?
"'It would have to be Nirvana. To have seen Dave [Grohl] in his youth playing with that raw energy would have been great."

ERIK STAMS

Born and raised in NYC, Erik has over 20 years of performing, recording, television, film and teaching experience. He's performed and recorded with artists including Jamie Lawson, Zervas and Pepper, Butch Thomas, Jon Langford, The Glyndebourne Touring Opera and The Darling Buds. He is head of drums at BIMM London.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?
"The original Little Feat with Lowell George on guitar and Richie Hayward on drums. What a band!"

PETE LOCKETT

Pete is one of the most versatile multi-percussionists on the planet and has played a dizzying range of instruments with artists including Björk, Peter Gabriel, Robert Plant, Michael Nyman and the Pet Shop Boys, as well as on a plethora of Hollywood films. He continues to tour worldwide as a soloist, collaborator and educator.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?
"It's not just 'who' for me, but when and where? It's a score draw... Early Who at one of the smaller London venues in 1965 or the Sex Pistols at a grimey London pub in 1977."

MIKE STURGIS

A 15-year veteran of *Rhythm* magazine, Mike has appeared live and on record with artists including A-ha, Steve Winwood, Jack Bruce, David Bowie, Elton John, Tom Jones, Bob James, Asia, Beverly Knight and many more. He plays with Redtenbacher's Funkestra and The Staks and is head of education for DIME Online.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?
"I have to say two: The Miles Davis Quintet circa 1965 with young Tony Williams on drums, and Weather Report in the early '80s with Peter Erskine. Both were unbelievable bands."

COLIN WOOLWAY

Colin has been playing and teaching drums professionally since 1976. He has done every kind of gig including eight years with rock icon Suzi Quatro. He is the founder of the Drumsense teaching programme and has written for *Rhythm* for over 20 years. Colin teaches at studios in Twickenham, The Brit School and ELAM.

Which band do you wish you'd seen live?
"The Miles Davis band featuring John McLaughlin on guitar, Jack DeJohnette on drums and Airto Moreira on percussion. No explanation needed!"

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For the featured tuition videos go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Getting Started...

Colin Woolway puts his best foot forward to get that hi-hat pedal working

Hello everyone, welcome back to my drum lesson and to the wacky world of stepped hi-hat notes. I often think that the hi-hat is the most underrated element of the drum set, and the art of playing it with the foot is largely ignored by a lot of drummers. But hopefully this lesson will help you get started on working that hi-hat pedal.

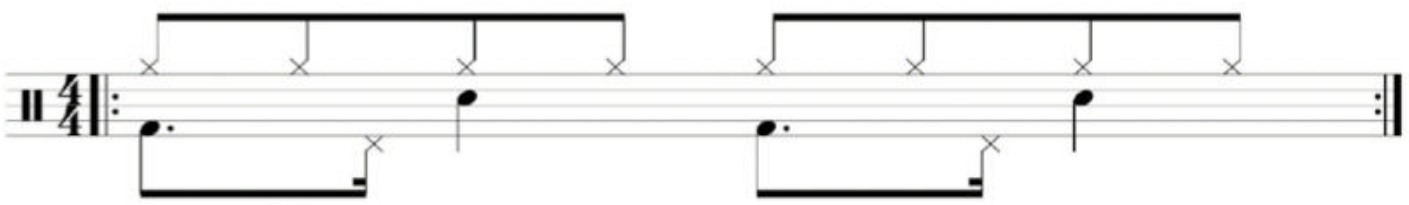
First, a quick word about technique; you can play the hi-hat pedal with your foot flat or with your heel slightly raised. The first technique is good for raising the hi-hat for specific musical intervals, while you will find the latter technique will give you a sharper, tighter note. Personally, I always practice both and I advise all my students to do the same and you will discover the difference. So let's get going...

Remember to always to check the video footage to see how it should sound, so you can make sure you're getting it right!

For Colin's video lesson go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Ex 1 shows a stepped hi-hat note on the 16th before the snare drum back beat.

1

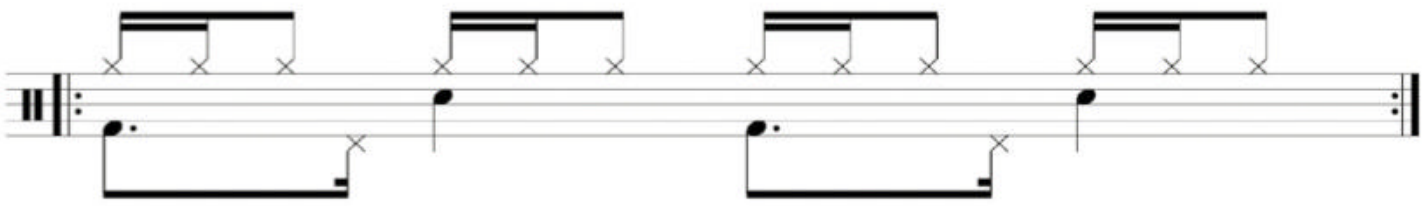


Ex 2 has the stepped note on the 16th directly after the snare drum.

2

Ex 3 has the right hand playing a broken 16th pattern on the closed high hat with a stepped hi-hat note on the missing 16th before the snare drum.

3



Ex 4 is a nice jazzy exercise combining snare drum and ride cymbal with the hands and the stepped hi-hat playing sixteenths in groups of four and three.

4

Creative Concepts

Erik Stams introduces a range of stepped hi-hat ostinato exercises

In this issue we will be focusing on playing stepped 8th notes and off-beat 8th notes on the hi-hat to add more momentum, syncopation and colour to our grooves.

Stepped hi-hat notes are produced by literally stepping on the hi-hat pedal. This involves the use of four-way coordination between your hands and feet. It is important to get your posture and balance right to make this feel good and to avoid injury.

There are a variety of techniques and approaches to playing drum pedals with your feet. Simply put, we can play either 'heel up' or'heel down'. There is no right or wrong choice, it is a matter of personal choice. A drummer may choose to use one technique or the other based on how it sounds or feels.

For the purposes of this lesson, I suggest playing heel up (both feet), with your back straight and your weight centred on the drum stool. Try to avoid having too much tension in the calf muscles. Allow your heel to drop after each stroke or series of strokes.

Exs 1-3 illustrate three different stepped hi-hat patterns along with ride cymbal and snare drum ostinati. Ex 1 shows stepped quarter notes, Ex 2 shows stepped 8th notes and Ex 3 shows stepped off-beat 8ths. Practice each of these slowly with a metronome, paying attention to balance and posture, and avoiding flams between the limbs.

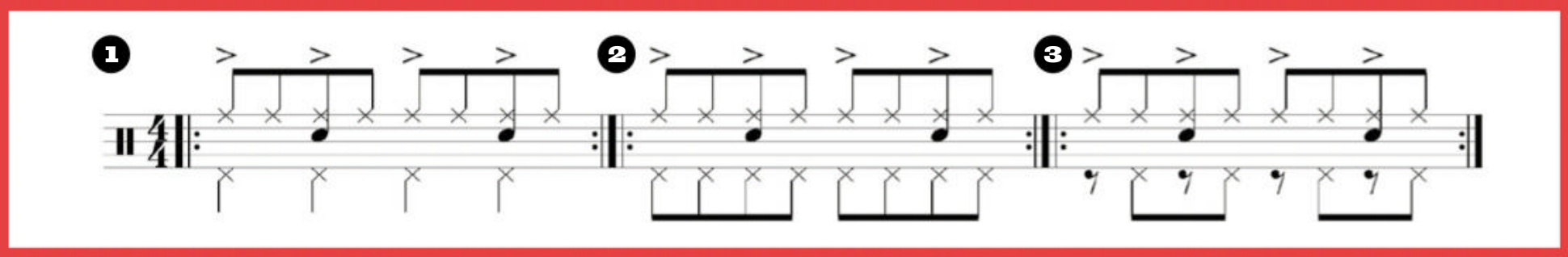
Exs 4-7 introduce a variety of bass drum placement ideas. This is by no means a comprehensive selection, just a few ideas to get you started. Explore playing the three previous stepped hi-hat patterns against all these grooves.

Ex 8 introduces ghost notes and Ex 9 introduces a displaced backbeat. Try playing all these ideas with no accents on the ride cymbal as well for a more urgent feel. 80bpm is a good starting tempo.

For Erik's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Heads up

Four-way coordination
The integration of all four limbs playing different voices of the drum kit.



Exs 1-3: Stepped hi-hat ostinati along with ride cymbal and snare drum (practice these with all the following examples)

Exs 4-7: A selection of bass drum placement exercises
Ex 8: Introducing ghost notes Ex 9: Introducing a displaced backbeat

Technical Difficulties

Pete Riley's stepped hi-hat shuffles provide a challenge for your coordination

Here we are going to continue this issue's theme of stepped hi-hat ideas but in a swing or shuffle context.

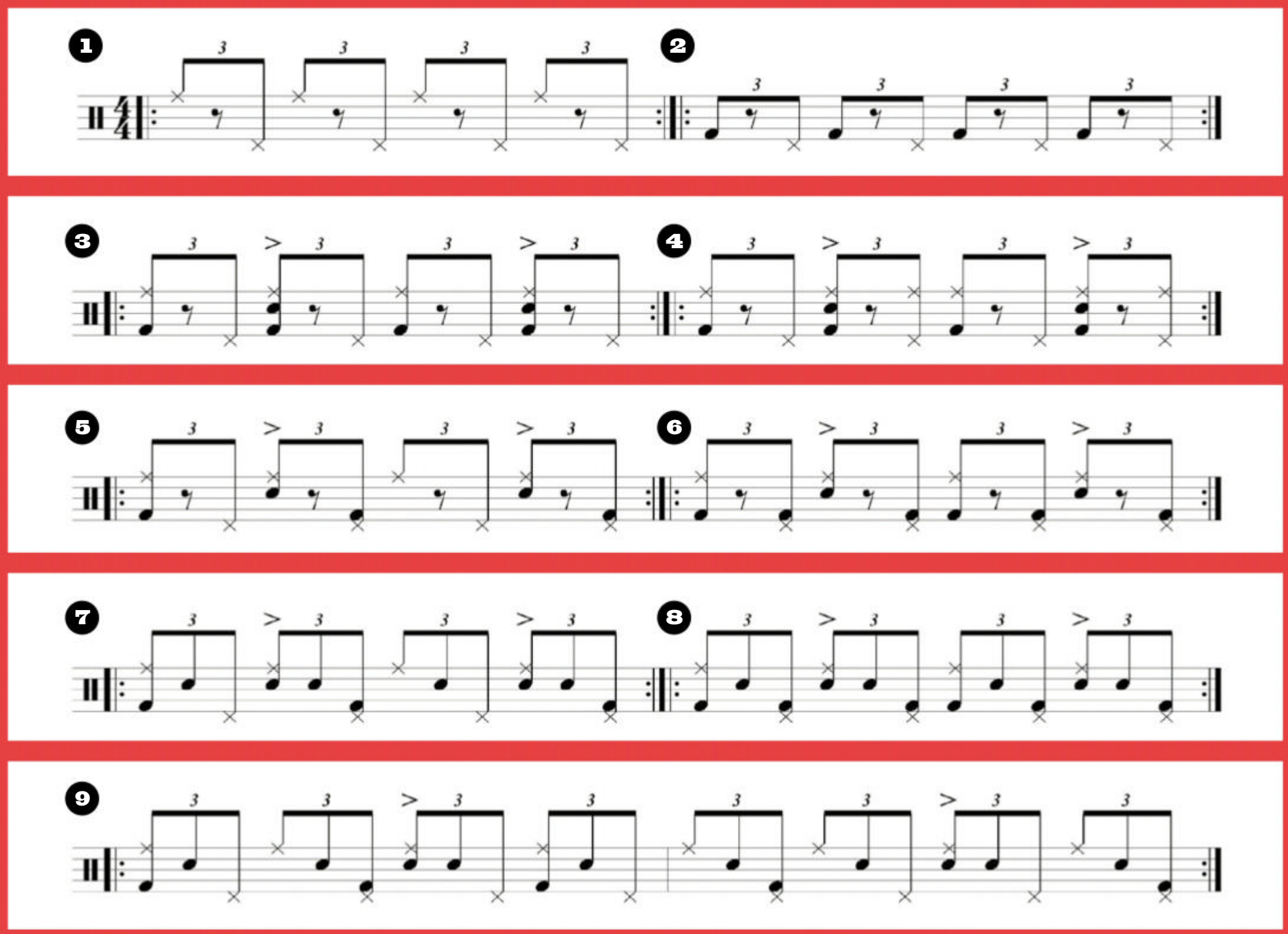
The basic patterns entail splitting the shuffle rhythm between the right hand and left foot, so the left foot plays the swung upbeat, or 'skip note' (Ex 1). This is an approach you may have seen used by Steve Gadd and usually featuring four-on-the-floor on the bass drum. So as well as being able to split the shuffle between right hand and left foot, you'll need to be able play it between the feet as seen in Ex 2.

In Ex 3 we've added a backbeat to create the full Steve Gadd pattern, while in Ex 4 the right hand plays the jazz ride pattern – by adding the skip note of 2 and 4 to the right hand – as an effective alternative.

Things become really interesting and quite challenging when we begin to apply some independence with the bass drum. Exs 5 and 6 show a couple of popular patterns, often referred to as a shuffle Charleston and a rock shuffle, respectively. We can also fill in the missing middle partial of the triplet as ghost notes and Exs 7 and 8 show that with the grooves seen in Exs 5 and 6.

For Pete's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Finally, as an extra challenge, we can apply the above ghosted ideas in a half-time context, with Ex 9 showing a groove similar to that played by Jeff Porcaro on Toto's 'Rosanna'.



rockschool®

Four-Piece Fills

More powerful fills with dense sticking combos courtesy of **Jason Bowld**

Image: Ryan Chang

For Jason's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

In the last issue of *Rhythm*, we looked at some combined linear/rudimentary fills. You could almost think of them as rudiments shared between the hands and feet, which takes a lot of coordination and dynamic 'Yin-Yang' to sound convincing.

But anything that sounds good and progresses your technique is worth the time, right? So I really hope you enjoy the challenge of this month's follow-up, playing some brand new linear-diddle fills.

Ex 1 starts with a mid-paced groove that features a built-in fill between the snare, hi-hat and kick drum. This fill fragment is played in 32nd notes and so is played at a high speed. The main fill, though, occurs in bar two, which comes in on the '2 a'.

Ex 2 is played in a similar vein except the fill in bar two is longer and made up of one phrase played twice. Ending with a drum and bass vibe, Ex 3 starts with a fast groove that once again uses a repeated phrase to create a two-bar fill. You'll recognise the triplet rudiment, RLL , as well as six-stroke roll stickings, RLLRRL, interspersed with quick kicks that combine to create a juggernaut of a fill.

Heads up

Yin-Yang

There's a certain amount of Yin-Yang that needs to happen for these fills to sound effective, and that comes in the form of powerful, snappy accents and kick doubles accompanied by low-level doubles played on the snare. If one of these is lacking, the fill will sound flat.

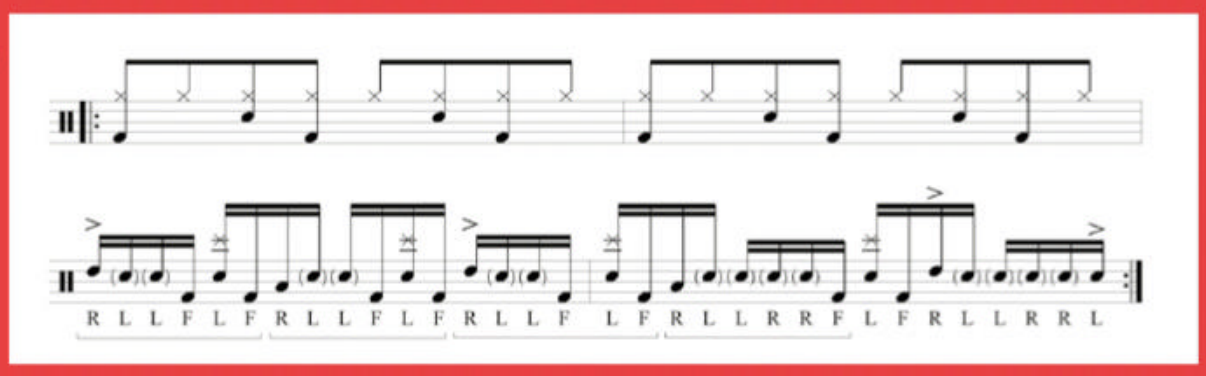
1

Don't be fooled by the laid-back nature of the groove here. The built in 'groove-fill' in bar one prepares you for the longer fill played in bar two. Technique-wise, I advise playing the accents with a whipping motion and focus on using your fingers and wrists for the doubles.

2

The first bar is exactly the same as Ex 1 here, but the fill is more challenging, mainly because the doubles are played on the toms, which have less rebound. When I play the fill in bar two, I don't think about every single note, I 'chunk' the fill into the two phrases in my mind (as shown by the brackets), focusing on the accents that start the fill.

3



This is played at max speed in the video but you don't need to play it this fast for it to be effective. Execution is more important to begin with, particularly if you choose to add the optional China on the snare accents, when you will need to focus on the movement to the floor tom from the China cymbal.

Percussion Toolbox

Pete Lockett explores the rich, low tones and beguiling metallic resonance of the Udu drum

I clearly remember the first time I heard this amazing percussion instrument. It was a duo concert by Jan Garbarek and Naná Vasconcelos. At a certain point in the concert Naná came forward and sat on the floor, right at the front of the stage, as Jan Garbarek exited. A spotlight closed in on the small area where Nana sat. The auditorium lights faded to total darkness. What happened next has stayed with me ever since.

It was one of the most magic moments of percussion I can remember. A deep and glorious tone came forth, rich in low tones and lush in a strange metallic resonance unlike anything I had ever heard before. All around the hall, people stretched their necks and peered around those in front of them to try and identify this mysterious sound. The solo continued from the exposed spot on the front of the stage – just Naná Vasconcelos, two wood blocks and what I now know as an Udu.

This instrument has become the cornerstone of a lot of percussionists' set-ups. Originating from Nigeria and not to be confused with the South Indian Ghatam, this amazing drum is now widely available from leading percussion manufacturers such as LP.

The origins of the drum have been traced back to central and southern Nigeria, and it is known by many different names depending on the tribal areas and particular religious ceremonies in which it often plays a significant role. The term 'udu' quite simply means 'pot' in the language of the Ibo tribe.

The instrument itself is a ceramic side-hole pot drum and it has two holes about three inches in diameter – one on the top and one on the side. They come in various sizes and are mostly played with the hands. Some of the larger drums have a table tennis-style paddle that is used for the incredibly deep low tones. Traditionally the body is more spherical in shape than the Ghatam, and has a narrow neck that leads up to the hole on its top. The second hole is normally on the side of the drum. They range in size from 18cm-40cm in height, each with a different pitch, the largest being the bass voice and the smallest the treble.

The most extensive range of Udus available outside of Nigeria is made by Latin Percussion, hand-designed by master potter Frank Giorgini. The closest design to the traditional drum is the CLAYTONE series that comes in four sizes. Traditionally, in Nigeria, the drum comes in four sizes, much like a family of different pitched drums found in a lot of African music.

Besides these, there's an extensive range of differently shaped contemporary drums with double chambers, adjoining tubes, multiple holes and all sorts of different configurations. Here though, we will focus on techniques for a basic Udu with one hole in the funnel and one in the body of the drum. All of the lessons could, of course, be played on any Udu drum. I will be using the Star Trek-shaped UTAR drum.

PLAYING POSITION

The drum can be played in many positions – in your lap, in a ring on the floor or on a table or even in a ring fixed into a snare drum stand. Some drumset players have it to the left of the hi-hat on top of a drum case. Anything can work as long as it ends up in a comfortable playing position.

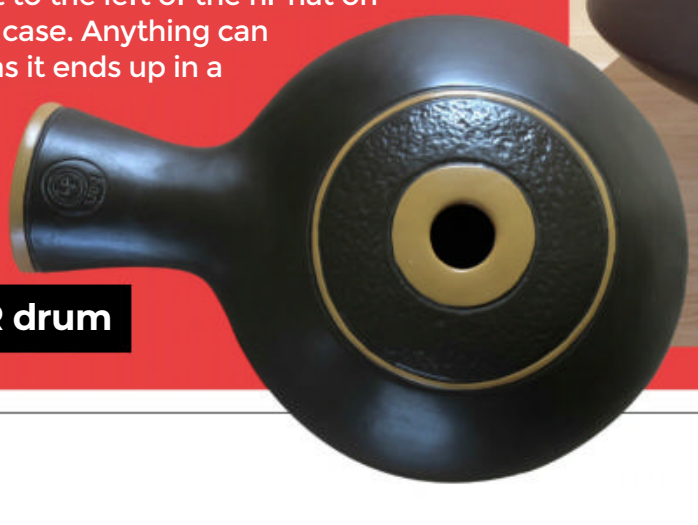


Fig 1 – UTAR drum

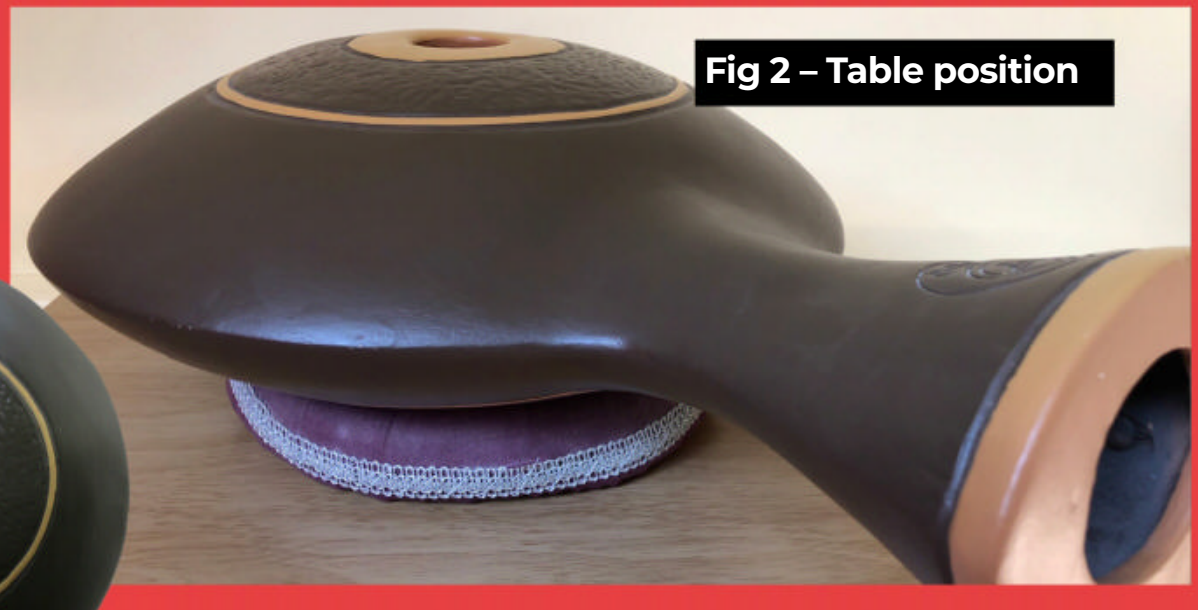


Fig 2 – Table position

For Pete's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Fig 3 – Floor position

Fig 4 – Snare cradle

The technique

One of the great things about this instrument in a contemporary setting is that mostly all hand percussion techniques work well on it. Heel-tip conga, Indian split hand, bongo thumb and finger tip, Arabic darabouka technique – they all have possibilities on this instrument. Admittedly, each player will need to be creative for it to work for them but it can all be applied.

The basic technique mainly involves striking the resonant body of the drum with the finger tips and luring the bass tone out of the hole with the flattened palm of the hand. Depending on the drum, finger tip strikes on the pot can have quite a metallic ring. This will invariably have an associated pitch with it, so bear this in mind to see if it might clash with the root note of the music you are playing with. Modern fibreglass drums and the slightly thicker LP drums have less of a specific tone to them, which I find more useful as a percussionist. In contrast, the Ghatam is always specifically built and tuned to a key note.

The strokes

We will have two basic strokes to get us started. The high-pitched sound with the finger tips on the body of the drum, and the low bass tone created by striking over the hole.

FINGER TIPS: HIGH-PITCHED TONE

This involves striking with all four finger tips on the main body of the drum, away from the hole. Different pitches can be created by striking in different places on the instrument. Only the top quarter of the fingers should hit the drum, not the whole flat hand. They should travel from around two inches out, strike the surface and not be pulled away too quickly. This stroke can be accented or non-accented. An accent is created by peforming the same action but from a further point of travel from the surface of the drum.

Fig 5 – Finger tips, top view

Fig 6 – Finger tips, side view

PALM: BASS TONE

This is actionable with both hands but for these articles I will only use the right hand for the low tone. Check out the 'O' outline on the palm in Fig 8 below. The objective is to place this directly over the hole, palm down, and leave it there. You should hear a low tone as the air is pushed out of the second hole. Travel approximately two to three inches to execute this tone.

Fig 7 – 'O' on hand over Udu for bass tone

Fig 8 – Hand position for bass tone over hole, top view

Fig 9 – Hand position for bass tone over hole, close up

Fig 10 – Palm of hand with hole position revealed for bass tone

Fig 11 – Bass tone, side view

You will notice that when you remove your hand from over the hole, there is a smaller, higher pitched tone that happens when the hole is opened again. Depending on the speed of the strike and removal of the hand, a lot of interesting effects and glissando can be created with this. We will look at this in later articles.

LETS PLAY!

Lets start out with some simple patterns to get us going. First, using a simple RLRL cycle of the hands we will develop a simple pattern of four as in Ex 1 – **BASS HIGH HIGH HIGH**

NOTATION KEY

1

In Ex 2, we elaborate on this pattern slightly, making it one full bar in length. As before, we work this exercise through two different time levels.

2

Ex 3 brings in our first accent. This should travel at least twice the distance of the non-accent. So, if the non-accent is two inches then the accent should be four inches.

3

The next example extends the pattern slightly and adds a few more accents. This simple pattern is divided 3/3/2.

4

In Ex 5 we take the same basic material as Ex 4 but rearrange it 3/2/3.

5

Finally, to add in something different from patterns created with a single stroke roll, we break up the groove a little bit and see how that works. When you play 'broken' patterns like this it gives space for the resonance and tone of the high-pitched strokes to ring out, especially on a resonant drum.

6

That's it for now. Please check in next time when we can take this to the next stage. Happy drumming!

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So, You Want To Play Hybrid?

Switch your module sounds on the fly for a cleaner performance, says **Tom Bradley**

Throughout this introduction to hybrid drumming we've worked on assigning samples to external pads and triggers, applying effects, layering samples and much more. By now you've likely built several sample banks to cater for different musical styles or projects using your hybrid setup.

In this lesson we'll discuss a few methods of streamlining and controlling these kit patches to ensure that they're stage-ready.

In terms of designing a setlist, often one patch per song will suffice, while sometimes we might need to change our sound from section to section. Some modules allow for copying and pasting of kits, which can be incredibly useful for organising your tracks and samples, although this is often a laborious process that can also be incredibly time-consuming.

Thankfully most modules feature a 'chain' function for quick setlist creation. This not only allows the effortless matching of patches to a setlist order, but also cycling quickly through a list of kits, which is particularly useful when using just a few generic kits, i.e 'electronic', 'percussion' and 'off'.

To take this to the next level you could designate one of your pads to be used as a controller, allowing patches to be changed without the need to press buttons with your fingers. The same functionality could be achieved with a standard footswitch, which is sometimes a better option when the sticks are flying.

In the case of the Roland SPD-SX, for example, any pad (including external) or footswitch can be programmed to move up or down through kits, control effects, mute all and much more.

Watch Tom's lesson now at www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Tech Talk

Patch
This is a term originating with modular synthesisers, which used patch cables to connect and create new sounds. In the context of e-drumming the word refers to each of your saved kits.

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A SERVANT TO THE MUSIC

Mike Sturgis celebrates Steve Gadd's unique combination of technical skill and innate musicality

Among musicians, the concept of 'serving the music' varies in its meaning depending on who you're speaking to. For some it may mean that they consider it their duty to bring something special to the music that can only be supplied by their unique skillset and expert perspective. Therefore, it is imperative that their musical excellence is clearly featured, including any trademark musical ideas. For others, it is about not imposing preconceived ideas and, usually through a consultative process, being willing to play anything that fulfils the needs of the music, even if that means playing only a small, supportive role.

While either of these approaches may be valid depending on the context, I would like to focus on the approach that is less concerned with playing anything specific. Having this mindset doesn't mean that you don't bring your own musical personality to a project, but that you're working in a collegial manner. To get a sense of what that might be like, let's take a look at Steve Gadd, a man who embodies this mentality.

Throwing away preconceptions

Perhaps more than any other drummer, Steve Gadd has a distinctly recognisable style, sound and vocabulary all of his own. Therefore, logic would say that anyone hiring him for a session would be delighted to have his musical ideas prominently featured in their music and always defer to his legendary skills and knowledge.

However, when asked in a 2002 *Rhythm* interview if he ever felt the pressure to

Steve Gadd

Image: James Cumpsty

Image Rob Blackham

"STEVE GADD HAS A DISTINCTLY RECOGNISABLE STYLE, SOUND AND VOCABULARY ALL OF HIS OWN."

bring his trademark ideas to a session, Steve said: "I don't really, because I think the main thing that I bring to the session isn't any kind of preconception of what I've got to do when I get there.

"The first thing I've got to do is to throw all that stuff out and just listen to what the music is on that particular day. Because I'm not going to determine what the music is; it's going to determine what I do.

"If I go in there with a clear head, then I've got a better shot at doing what's best for the music.

"So, the main challenge is to get out of my own way and just listen to the music before I play it, and listen to what people are verbalising that they want, and try to interpret that musically. Because it's about me giving them what they need, it's not about me getting off."

Staying in the moment

To gain a first-hand perspective on Steve's musicality, I consulted New York-based session drummer Graham Hawthorne, who has performed and recorded with some of the world's biggest artists in rock, pop, jazz and African music. One of his more noteworthy endeavours was being Steve's deputy for Paul Simon. Regarding Steve's consummate musicality, Graham kindly shared two great stories.

"In 2000, when I filled in for Steve with Paul Simon, we were both on the tour for the first week or so while I transitioned in," he recalls. "What mainly struck me was how much of an 'in-the-moment', reactive musician Steve was.

"The band had been off for a number of weeks during which time he had been rehearsing with Eric Clapton. I was sitting next to him on the drum riser during rehearsals and on three or four occasions, he turned to me before counting off a tune and asked, "What is this again? I can't remember what the groove is."

"I would tell him as concisely as possible, 'It's that sort of mellow Brazilian thing with the broken tom groove and a quarter note bass drum', or what have you, then he would count off the tune and play superbly – most often playing something totally different from what I had faithfully transcribed off the board tape I had been given!

"He was playing reactively to what the feeling was at that moment, and what the other players were playing. He was never caught up in what he had played previously, what was on the original record, or anything else.

Graham Hawthorne

"That came as a surprise to me, because for 25 years prior, while trying so desperately to play like him, I had assumed that he was the kind of musician who studiously planned out what he was going to play. Indeed, to listen to his playing on any one of the quasi-orchestral Chick Corea compositions, one would think he was studying the score and premeditating every long, short, loud, soft or ghosted note, tailoring it to what was prescribed by the written music.

"In all – or almost all – cases, what he played did match and support the other players and the written music perfectly, but what I realised was that a great deal of the seamless musicality of his playing was simply an immense natural talent buttressed by flawless technique and ability, and finally seasoned by a complete lack of ego and consequent 100% commitment to making the music sound as good as possible."

No such thing as a bad venue

Graham continues: "Several years later we were on a three-act bill together in The Cathedral of St. John The Divine in New York. It's an impossible room, acoustically speaking, as with more than 100-foot ceilings and granite walls, ceiling and floor, there is probably 20 seconds of natural reverb decay.

"Steve was playing with The Clapton Blues Quartet. The first act was a big African pop band with drums, two percussionists, two guitarists, keyboards, horns and singers. It was a completely unintelligible mess. There was such a cacophony of sound you could barely even hear the beat.

"Next was the band I was playing with, which was a hard rock band. Wisely, the singer decided we would play unplugged when he saw and heard what we were dealing with. We set up very close together, kept the monitors very low and got through it okay.

"When I went up to the dressing rooms, Steve came straight over and asked, 'What's the sound like?' He was very concerned. I told him it was a mess and I thought that the quieter one played, the better. I saw him go over to the other guys he was playing with, presumably to talk to them about it.

"I went out and sat at the same table in the house from where I had watched the first act. They came out and miraculously sounded really good. Of course, it was still reverberant, but they managed to somehow play that room with energy. I was blown away. The sound crew was the same for all three acts, so it wasn't that. It was another example of how musical, sensitive and skilled he is, and it was the last time I blamed a bad gig on the sound people, room or equipment."

"WATCHING STEVE PLAY WAS THE LAST TIME I BLAMED A BAD GIG ON THE SOUND PEOPLE, ROOM OR EQUIPMENT."

Musical transcendence

Another phenomenal drummer who has been hugely influenced by Steve's ability to serve the music is Benny Greb.

"Steve is the master of context," Benny concisely states. "He sounds so good because of what he does and how he does it in the right moment. True genius is when you can turn simple things into wonders. He sometimes plays things that are easy to understand, but which make such a big effect emotionally that it makes you think, 'How did he come up with that? And why didn't I?'"

As Benny alludes to, the combination of Steve's phenomenal technical skills and depth of musicality are difficult to quantify and result in outcomes that are almost magical. His ability to always get a great sound from his instrument, make perfect choices musically across a vast range of styles, and execute performances with virtuoso technique in a career spanning over 50 years is truly mind-blowing.

While thousands of hours spent behind the kit and listening to music have been integral to his musical outcomes, it is perhaps the wider perspective that Steve brings to the music that gives his playing an almost transcendent quality.

"I believe in a higher power, and what I've learned is that spirituality is a lot different to religion," says the man himself. "So, I hope that spirituality enters into my playing. Although it's not because that's what I decide to do right before I play, so much as, hopefully, that's the way I'm trying to live my life. And the playing is an extension of that."

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Quotes from Steve Gadd courtesy of the Mark Walker 2002 Rhythm *interview. Benny Greb quote courtesy of the 2011 Mike Dolbear interview.*

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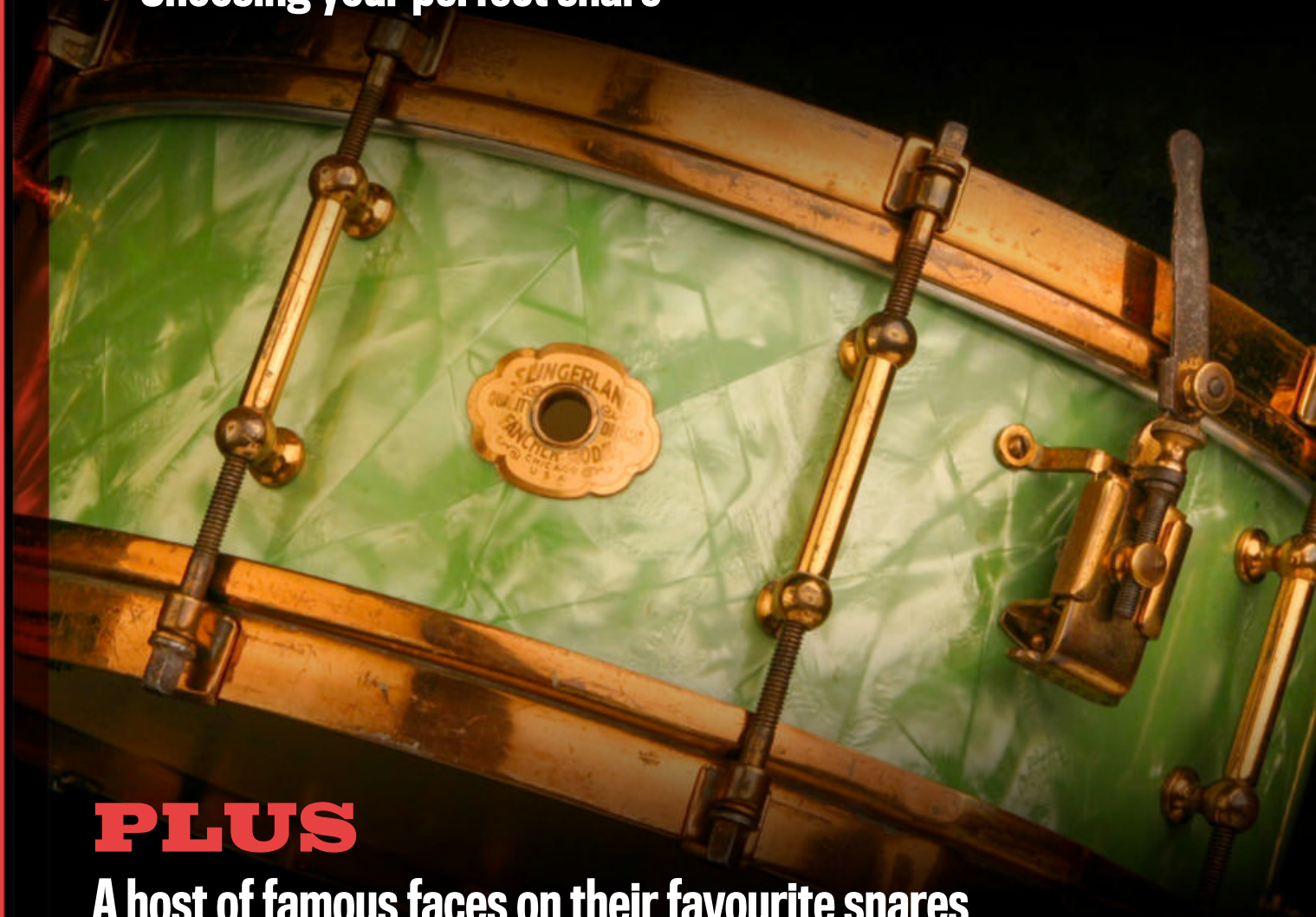

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Six of the Best

Image James Cumpsty

CLEM CATTINI

The British session legend spotlights the chart-topping instrumentals, rock 'n' roll classics and Wombling hits he has played on

The Tornados

Track: 'Telstar'
Single: 'Telstar', 1962

"We were formed, basically, by Joe [Meek, producer] as a session band. The stuff I did with Joe! He recorded the bass drum case, not the bass drum. It was a bit awkward because the pedal used to move around. Joe did lots of different things to get sounds – I was dropping marbles into the toilet bowl and jumping up and down on a tray full of gravel. The bathroom and toilet were his echo chambers."

Johnny Kidd & The Pirates

Track: 'Shakin' All Over'
Single: 'Shakin' All Over', 1960

"That was done at Abbey Road. It was one mic over the top and one mic on the bass drum – that was it. The drum break in the middle was a cock-up. In the rock 'n' roll days, the drummer always did a fill into the guitar solo. I started to do this thing, instead of being one bar it ended up as two bars because I couldn't get out of it. The producer, Pete Sullivan, said to keep it in."

Cliff Richard

Track: 'Devil Woman'
Album: *I'm Nearly Famous*, 1976

"It got him back into the charts and because of that I got the job with Cliff and went on tour with him for two-and-a-half or three years. I was one of the first guys on the session scene to take the bottom heads off the drums and have the mics up inside the drums. I was the first one to take the front head off the bass drum and put a blanket inside it so you could get a thud."

Donovan

Track: 'Hurdy Gurdy Man'
Album: *The Hurdy Gurdy Man*, 1968

"That was done at Olympic Studios in Barnes. Mickie Most was the producer. It was Alan Parker on guitar, myself on drums, John Paul Jones on bass – we were in the Lulu band together – and Donovan. According to the pundits, it was John Bonham and Jimmy Page. It took me two years to prove I was on it. I've still got the letter from John Paul Jones that proves it."

Love Affair

Track: 'Everlasting Love'
Album: *The Everlasting Love Affair*, 1968

"It was a great arrangement by a bloke called Keith Mansfield. Everyone falls over themselves trying to play the fill I did in the middle of it and to be honest, so did I. It was like 'Hurdy Gurdy Man', thinking, 'What was I thinking at the time?' But they liked it, so they kept it in. I always say, 'Play the song'. That's what you've got to do. Use your ears and play the song, that's all you're there for."

The Wombles

Track: 'Wombling White Tie And Tales (Fox Trot)' Album: *Superwombling*, 1975

"I did all the Wombles' early stuff. 'Wombling White Tie And Tails' was off one of the albums. It was a little jazz thing that was done over at Wessex Sound Studios, Highbury. I did a Christmas *Top Of The Pops* for 'Wombling Merry Christmas', dressed up as a Womble. I was Bungo. I've never had so many cuddles from girls in my life. They were coming up wanting to give Bungo a cuddle, it was great."

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